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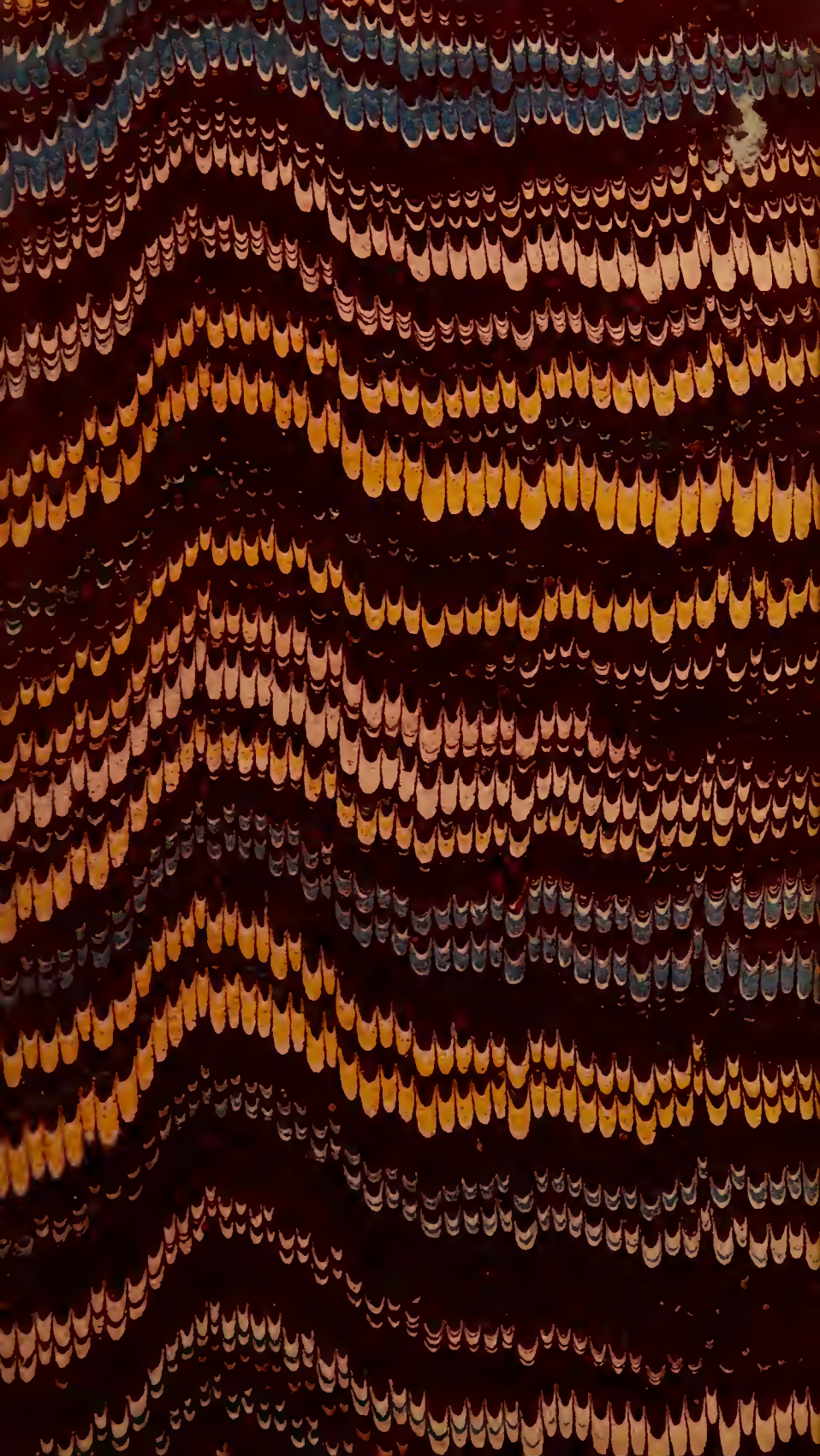

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HISTORY

OF THE

FEMALE SEX;

COMPRISING

A VIEW OF THE HABITS, MANNERS, AND INFLUENCE OF WOMEN, AMONG ALL NATIONS, FROM THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME.

Translated from the German of

C. MEINERS,

Councillor of State to his Britannic Majesty, and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Gottingen.

BY FREDERIC SHOBERL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I ESTEEM myself happy, that it has fallen to my lot to introduce to the notice of the British public the name of a writer, whose well-earned reputation and popularity in his own country may reasonably be deemed pledges of his favourable reception in this.

Among the living authors of Germany, none is more distinguished for various and extensive erudition than CHRISTOPHER MEINERS. Whatever Greece and Rome, Britain, France, Italy, Spain, and Germany have produced most interesting in the principal departments of literature,

especially in history, philosophy, and statistics, he has read in the original languages, and that in such a manner, as to have the prodigious stock of information which he has thus acquired continually within his reach. In a word, there are few literati who have read more, or to better purpose. Solicitous rather to inform than to shine, to be extensively useful than elaborately profound, very few of the performances of his prolific pen are designed for the mere man of letters; but far the greater number of them are calculated for the use of the general reader. His investigations have been principally directed to historical subjects; and the productions that have resulted from these inquiries are replete with accurate information, so that they are continually quoted by the most celebrated scholars of the continent. To the English reader it may not be uninteresting to observe, that he has written an Introduction to Gibbon's

work on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, in which, though he admits the merits of our elegant historian, he is not blind to his defects.

What confers a particular value on the writings of M. Meiners, and renders them highly instructive to such as read for the purpose of information, is, that he always makes a point of quoting his authorities with scrupulous accuracy, and gives nothing as his own, but what is really such. It is likewise no small recommendation to his works, and has contributed not a little to their popularity, that he never attempts to dazzle by unexpected sallies of wit, or paradoxical opinions and observations. Far from the studied elegance of fine writers, who are continually hunting for far-fetched expressions, his object is to instruct in an easy way. His style is unaffected, but not careless, and his ideas are always clear. Indeed, the volumes here presented to the public may

serve as a very fair specimen of the manner he has adopted in all his historical performances.

After this brief notice relative to the author of the History of the Female Sex, I shall proceed to make a few observations on the work, and the version of it, which is here submitted to the public.

The first volume of the original appeared in 1788; and it was not till after a period of twelve years that the last was published, in 1800. It is to be presumed, that, in the labours of various travellers, historians and other writers, which have been given to the world during that period, some particulars might be found of which the author would have been glad to avail himself occasionally to illustrate, confirm or correct his statements and opinions. The task of consulting the authorities which are here alluded to, I regret that I was prevented from under-

taking, by the haste with which, for reasons which it is unnecessary to detail, I was obliged to execute this translation.

It is possible that my fair country-women may be dissatisfied with the small space which the ladies of Britain occupy in this History, and may think that strict justice has not been done them in the general reflections which the author has subjoined. I will not attempt to dissemble that such was the impression produced, at least, on my mind; but yet with the best inclination, the cause to which I have just referred, imperiously forbade any attempt either to enlarge or to vindicate.

One more remark I shall beg leave to make. In the numerous quotations which the Author has subjoined by way of Notes, he has always retained the language of the original which he cites. The substance, or perhaps the very words of these passages, are sometimes introduced into the

text; but where this is not the case, and other reasons did not induce me to leave them as they stood, I have given a translation of them for the benefit of the mere English reader.

If the consideration of a subject, in which every member of society is more or less concerned; if a vast fund of information, collected with great labour from a thousand sources; if numberless curious anecdotes and facts, communicated in a pleasing and unaffected manner, are calculated to interest and entertain, then I may confidently assert that there are few readers who will not derive either instruction or amusement from these volumes, and fondly anticipate for my exertions the suffrage of public approbation.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN this work I enquire not only into the history of the manners of women, but also into that of their intrinsic merits, of the rights and duties, the respect or disrespect resulting from them, and of the more or less happy condition of the sex in all ages and among all nations.

In the first volume comprehending the History of Women among all nations, and even those of Europe, till the conclusion of the age of chivalry, I have not indulged in any observations except when they seemed necessary either to connect the

facts adduced, or to direct the attention of the reader to such points as appeared particularly worthy of notice. The second is occupied entirely with the History of the Female Sex in France till the accession of Louis XIV. The third brings it down to the end of the reign of his successor; and in the fourth, after completing the History of Women among the different nations of Europe, I have subjoined some general observations, which present themselves as the last results of the survey of the state of the sex in all countries and all ages, and which may be used as a scale or standard of its worth and morals and of the degree of consideration in which it was held.

Most people are so habituated to regard that state of things in which they have been bred from their earliest in-

fancy, as the best or the only natural state, that they cannot withhold their astonishment when they are informed that not very long since a totally different system prevailed in the same countries and among the same nations. Accordingly many of my readers will, no doubt, be surprized to find that the way of living of the kings and princes some centuries ago, and the regulations, the etiquette, and the diversions of their courts, differed exceedingly from those of the present day; that such courts as now exist did not begin to be formed till toward the conclusion of the fifteenth, or rather at the commencement of the sixteenth century; and that these modern courts have produced very great changes in the mutual relations and manners of both sexes, as well

as in their language, education, and dress. I am therefore grossly mistaken, if the historical pictures exhibited in these volumes fail to excite a lively interest in readers who are desirous of acquiring information.

In the composition of this work, I have not, to my knowledge, omitted to avail myself of one single authority of any consequence. On the contrary, I have been at the pains to read through many volumes for the sake of individual chapters, and, after all, my trouble has not been rewarded with the discovery of one solitary fact that could be of any service to me. If in the works which I have consulted, any circumstance worthy of notice should have escaped me, the candor of the reader will ascribe it not to any want

of attention during the perusal of them, but to an oversight which cannot always be avoided.

A comparison of my work with the Essai sur le Caractère, les Moeurs, et l'Esprit des Femmes, *by the French orator, Thomas, and with the* History of Women, *by Alexander, will shew every impartial reader that I could not derive much information suitable to my purpose from either of those performances.*

INTRODUCTION.

The history of no people, of no other class of society, presents a spectacle so revolting, a spectacle that so powerfully excites the sentiments of horror and compassion, as the history of the condition of the female sex among most of the nations of the globe. The lot of slaves themselves was formerly enviable, when compared with that of women; and, by an unaccountable contradiction, the men of those very nations, who treated the captive enemies whom they had enslaved, with the greatest lenity and forbearance, degraded the companions of their lives, and the mothers of their children, by the most rigid oppression and sovereign contempt. Among more than one half of the human race, the life of women was an uninterrupted series of hardships and humiliations, the patient endurance of which could scarcely be expected of human nature; and the condition of the maid, the wife, and the widow, was a state of progressively aggravated subjection and misery, in which all the mortifications and evils of

life were accumulated; and from which, on the other hand, almost all its pleasures and enjoyments were excluded. In many countries, even at the present day, females are sold by their fathers before they behold the light, or during the years of early infancy; and where this practice has not been adopted, the parents barter away the charms of their daughters, resign them to the arms of every one who chuses to pay a certain premium for the short-lived enjoyment, and at length make them over, without their consent, to the highest bidder, or to the man who engages to serve them for the longest time. Among savage nations, the entrance into the married state is for the female the commencement of the most cruel and abject slavery; for which reason many women dread matrimony more than death. Young females are obliged to perform, if not all, at least the most laborious duties, both at home and abroad; and to provide food and cloathing, not only for their children, but also for their indolent and unfeeling husbands. So far from being remunerated with affection and gratitude for these incessant labours, which either prematurely terminate the lives of many, or plunge them into despair, these wretched

creatures are treated with the utmost contempt, which is converted into the highest degree of religious abhorrence, during periodical infirmities, nay even when they are about to impart to the hearts of their obdurate tyrants such joys as fathers only know; or when they are engaged in performing the sacred duties of maternity. Women, during pregnancy, while suckling their offspring, or when subject to the infirmities incident to the sex, so far from receiving consolation and assistance, in circumstances, which among us, are capable of moving even the most insensible heart, are on the contrary avoided as infectious, and as objects of the divine wrath. In many cases, they are even prohibited from living in the same habitation with their husbands; and much less are they allowed to eat with, or to touch them. It is not sufficient that women who are pregnant, or give suck, are deprived of the society of their husbands, and the pleasures of matrimony; they are also obliged, without complaining, to suffer them to form connexions with other females, and even to take the latter into their houses. Nor is this all; for when the first wives begin to lose their charms, or the husbands to be weary of them, they are under the

necessity of submitting to be slaves of their more youthful and arrogant successors. This galling yoke would perhaps be endured with some degree of patience by the women, whose sensibility is not more refined than that of the other sex, if the love and affection of their children compensated in some degree, for the indifference and cruelty of their fathers. Among a great number, perhaps we may say among the majority, of the nations in which the sex is most unhappy, mothers possess not the smallest authority over their children, and particularly the sons that are past the years of infancy. On the contrary, they are obliged to submit to every species of abuse, of which their brutal offspring frequently make a boast; or if a mother were to chastise an unruly boy, even in the mildest manner, she would herself incur the most cruel correction from the unreasonable father. Though these women are thus doomed to a life of incessant labour; though they endure with such patience the coldness and ill-treatment of their husbands, the ingratitude of their children, and the arrogance of more favoured rivals, still even this horrible state of degradation and misery cannot be considered as perma-

nent; for on the slightest pretexts, wives are repudiated, sold, or put to death with impunity. Even after the decease of their husbands, widows have seldom to expect any mitigation of their lot; but have in general more reason to apprehend an aggravation of their sufferings. They are either sold by the relatives of their husbands, or plundered of their little property, and expelled from their habitations. Very often after witnessing the death of their infants by the tedious pangs of hunger, they themselves share the same cruel fate. But if famine and misery should not terminate their sufferings, yet on the approach of age, females are not sure of their lives for a single day. If any accident whatever befals an ignorant savage, and he is unable to account for it in any other way, he has no hesitation to ascribe his misfortunes to the magic spells of some old woman, and this alone is sufficient to remove the supposed sorceress out of the world, without farther accusation, trial, or condemnation.

This is a faithful picture of the condition of the female sex among almost all the inferior nations of Mongol origin, who may be regarded as intermediate beings between the European and the

irrational animals. Many of them, indeed, partake much more of the disposition of the brute, than of the character of the European. Subjected to every hardship, and possessing not a single prerogative, the women of the Mongol nations are denied even those privileges which Europeans consider the inviolable rights of man, and which our laws and customs secure to the lowest menial, and the most dangerous enemy. The deplorable condition of the sex among these brutal people, so far from being ameliorated by their ardent constitution, and the violence of sensual appetite, or by the highest degree of civilization of which those nations are susceptible, is only rendered still more irksome.

The lecherous negroes treat their wives with little less cruelty and contempt than the cold Americans; and the large nations of southern Asia, who have made the farthest advances from the savage state of all the ancient tribes of Mongol origin, conduct themselves towards their daughters, wives, and widows, with still greater cruelty, if possible, than even the negroes and Americans. Among other nations, the lot of the weaker sex was the more tolerable, or the more comfortable, the more those nations were influenced by

the principles of genuine humanity, or possessed the qualities characteristic of generous minds. The Orientals, as they are denominated, being more indolent, more unfeeling, and more ardent than the Slavonic nations of our quarter of the globe, the women among the former, were always much more oppressed than those of the latter; and among these, they were never treated with such consideration and indulgence as by the nations of Celtic origin, whose more generous disposition was manifested, even in a state of barbarism, in their conduct toward the sex. The more liberal and humane were the sentiments that pervaded the people, the more limited was the power of fathers and husbands over their daughters and wives; the more the former were consulted on the subject of marriage, the more free and independent were the latter, without, however, enjoying unbridled liberty of will; the smaller was the danger of being repudiated without just reason, and finally the less precarious was their lot, in case of separation by mutual consent, or if their husbands were snatched from them by the hand of death.

Among the nations distinguished for liberality of sentiment, the cultivation of

the mind, in a greater or less degree, had scarcely any influence upon their conduct towards the sex; for among the most generous and valiant European nations, females possessed, even in the barbarous ages, prerogatives not inferior, nay, perhaps even superior to those which they enjoyed after the introduction of the arts and sciences; but the purity or corruption of manners effected a rapid and important revolution in the condition of women. The more the two sexes indulge in vicious gratifications, the weaker, or rather the more enervated the men become, and the bolder and the more masculine the women; the greater is the respect paid to shameless females; the more the imbecile husband is enslaved and maltreated; the more the privileges and the riches of the women are increased, and the more the selfish and degraded creatures of the other sex are oppressed. There are even some Mongol tribes in which the women govern the men with unlimited sway, and avenge, on these slaves, the injustice experienced by their sex among other nations of the same origin.

HISTORY

OF THE

FEMALE SEX.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Condition of the Female Sex among the Heathen Nations of Siberia, and the Aborigines of America.

THE condition of women among the heathen nations of Siberia, and the Aborigines of America, who are descended from the inhabitants of the north-east part of Asia, is alone a sufficient demonstration of one half of the preceding introductory observations; that is, that the greater is the indolence, the insensibility, and the ignorance of the men, so much the less respect is paid to the women, and so much the worse is the treatment they receive.

But as the slavery of whole nations cannot be solely the effect of the arbitrary power and cruelty of despots, but must be partly ascribed to the imbecility or corruption of their oppressed subjects; so the degradation of the female sex originates, not only in the vices of the men, but also in the defects of the women. We find, accordingly, that among all the nations of Siberia and America, by whom the female sex is treated with the greatest degree of cruelty, the women are as destitute of virtue, and in particular as inconstant, faithless, and immodest, as the men are cruel, idle, and insensible. Men of a more noble disposition would not treat even such women as Siberia and America produce, as they are treated by the original inhabitants of these remote regions: but at the same time, these cruel and merciless savages would not oppress women of more generous dispositions as they oppress their own; neither would the females of Europe brook the tyranny that is exercised on those of Siberia and America. An observation which I have elsewhere made respecting whole nations, may therefore be applied to women, and we may with truth affirm, that neither the one nor the other can be ruled with

despotic authority, unless their apathy and degradation merit no better fate, and enable them to bear the hardships that fall to their lot.

One of the principle causes of the contempt and ill-treatment which the Siberian and American women have to endure, is the prejudice universally adopted by the other sex, that females are impure beings, and odious to the gods; that their periodical evacuations, pregnancy, child-birth, and even suckling, are the effects of the divine wrath, or contagious infirmities, by which men, animals, and other objects, which women happen to touch, are rendered unfit to assist at any religious ceremony, and incur the divine displeasure. This prejudice was the more deeply rooted among all these nations, the less their unenlightened minds were capable of discerning the causes and designs of all the contingencies incidental to the nature of woman; and the more insensible the men were to the charms, the deserts, and the sufferings of women, so much the more violent was their aversion, and so much the more cruel their behaviour to the female sex in consequence of this ridiculous notion. The most intelligent

nations of the earth, those of genuine Celtic origin, even during the ages of barbarism, so far from considering their women under the above-mentioned circumstances as impure, or objects of abhorrence, manifested, at such times, a greater degree of tenderness and compassion; and rendered them every assistance which their situation required. The Greeks and Romans, it is true, entertained the prejudice, that women, during their courses, and for some time after child-birth, were infectious or impure; but this notion was abandoned in the more enlightened ages, and was consequently less uneradicable among these nations than among the Orientals, who cherish it to this day, and with so much the more obstinacy, the more uncivilized they are. Even among some of the latter, this opinion of the religious impurity of women did not procure the sex such treatment as it produced among all, or most of the Mongol nations. The Orientals are too fond of women to be led by the absurd notion of their impurity to degrade and oppress them in such a degree as almost all the ignoble nations, and particularly the pagan tribes of Siberia have done. As the Laplanders, Samojedes, and

Ostiaks, the Burætes, the Tungusians, and other Siberian nations resemble each other in language, conformation, and disposition; so they also agree in their treatment of females during the periods of menstruation, pregnancy, child-birth, and suckling, when they not only abhor them as impure, but even put them away from their huts, or separate them at least in such a manner, that they cannot touch either the men themselves, or their food and utensils. Among several of these nations, women, even when they are neither indisposed nor pregnant, nor recently delivered, are looked upon to be so unclean, that they are never permitted to approach the sacred fire, and still less the presence of the gods, or the places of sacrifice; and it is thought necessary to purify every thing they have touched before it is used, by means of fire, for fear of being polluted by the impurity communicated to food, clothes, implements, or utensils.

The wretched condition of the Siberian women is attested by numerous witnesses. In Siberia, and particularly in the eastern islands, there are various tribes among whom not the least vestige of marriage can be discovered; the women shifting about

continually from place to place, leading a precarious life, and procuring an uncertain subsistence. Among most of them, however, wives are purchased either with goods or money, or by services which the bridegroom performs for the father of the bride. In many of these cases, the father has no more idea of consulting his daughter of seven or eight years, than if he were bargaining for a rein-deer or a sable's skin. These graceless parents seldom give any dowry to their children whom they thus dispose of, or they present them at the most with one-fourth of the purchase money, or of the value of the commodities which they have received in exchange. It cannot, therefore, excite astonishment that husbands should treat their wives as slaves, or regard them as beasts of burden, or domestic animals, who are theirs by right of purchase, and whom they may abuse as they please. As little as the father concerns himself about the consent of his daughter, when disposing of her in marriage, so little does the husband consult his wife, when he chuses to oblige a friend with a participation in her charms, or has an opportunity of gaining an honest profit by the sale of them.

In Siberia, it is considered as one of the

duties of hospitality for a man to offer his wife or daughter to a stranger, or an acquaintance who calls to pay him a visit; so that it belongs to the rights of the Siberian husband that he can relinquish his wife for a time by way of etiquette, as he would lend his rein-deer, his dogs, and his sledges.* Husbands indeed regard it as an encroachment upon their prerogative, if their wives resign themselves, without their privity, to the embraces of others, and especially of natives; but they are easily pacified if a sheep be offered as an indemnification. If any one observes that a neighbour has taken a particular fancy to his wife, he either exchanges her for the wife of the other, or sells her perhaps for a bladder of train-oil, without the slightest objection on the part of the woman. If the reader is astonished at this ready compliance of the Siberian females, his amazement will be augmented when he is informed that women, when the years of youth are fled, and they find themselves past child-bearing, frequently seek younger wives for their husbands, and themselves perform, like slaves, all the laborious domestic

* *Georgi's Description of the Russian Nations.*

drudgery*. Though it is impossible to feel any great compassion for women who voluntarily suffer themselves to be prostituted by their husbands, to be sold, or bartered away like domestic animals, and to be made the slaves of more youthful rivals, still it is a kind of consolation to learn that the right of retaliation is sometimes exercised upon the oppressors. The elder Gmelin, himself, saw an aged Tungusian beaten by his young wife, and his son who had attained the years of manhood, because he expressed his displeasure at the incestuous commerce carried on between them almost before his face†. The Tungusians, to which tribe this unfortunate father and husband belonged, are just as weak as the other heathen nations of Siberia; but on the invasion of the Russians, they displayed a greater degree of martial spirit, which appears to have been communicated also to their women. Certain it is, at least, that the wives and daughters of many Tungusians, are not less expert in the management of the horse, and the use of the bow, than the men, with whom they even take the field

* *Weber's Russia.*
† *Gmelin's Travels.*

in war*. Notwithstanding this shew of masculine spirit, the Tungusian females are as often sold and exchanged as the women of any of the other tribes inhabiting the dreary and widely extended regions of Siberia.

The Kamtschadales differ in a striking manner from all the other Siberian nations in the absolute authority which they suffer their wives to exercise over them. Among the Kamtschadales, daughters are, it is true, sold by their fathers for the labour of a longer or shorter period of service; but the father never disposes of his daughter in this way without previously consulting her inclination†. He merely permits the bridegroom to labour for him, to pass as much time as he possibly can in his daughter's company, and to sleep in the same hut with her: but if the girl rejects a suitor, she is not compelled by the father either to marry or surrender her person to him; all the time the lover has spent in the service of his intended father-in-law, is lost; neither can he complain, or require any compensation. Even when a female encourages the suit of a lover,

* *Isbrand*, in the 8th vol. of the *Voyages au Nord*.
† *Steller*.

neither he nor her father can appoint the day for the nuptials. The customs of these people allow the father no other privilege than that of permitting his future son-in-law to enjoy his daughter by force, the first favourable opportunity; and the bridegroom has no alternative but to avail himself of such occasions at the peril of his life, or at least of his skin. If the girl proves inexorable, the first attempts to gain possession by surprize scarcely ever succeed; her cries bring to her aid all her female friends, who furiously fall upon the assailant with their nails and fists, and punish him for his temerity. Though the Kamtschadales are so indolent, that when they imagine they have a sufficient stock of provisions, they would not stir a finger, even if the sables were to enter their huts, which formerly they not unfrequently did; yet the domestic labours are much more equitably divided between the two sexes in Kamtschatka, than among the other uncivilized inhabitants of Siberia; the men undertaking various offices, by which other savages would consider themselves disgraced. They not only perform the cookery of the family, as among the Laplanders, but willingly do every kind of drudgery which

their wives direct. Such is the attachment, or rather the submission of the Kamtschadales, that, without murmuring, they suffer their wives to have the custody of all the valuables they possess, and when they want any article, to deal it out to them in such proportions as they please. When a man has been guilty of infidelity to his wife, she not only refuses him the conjugal rights, but denies him tobacco, which among the Kamtschadales, and all the other nations of Mongol origin, is still more indispensable than even brandy itself. This circumstance, and the kindness of their wives, subdue the husbands, not by violence, but by means of the humblest intreaties, and the most tender caresses. If want and hunger compel the Kamtschadales to quit their huts, and to go a fishing or hunting, they never wander so far as to prevent them from returning home at night, and recruiting themselves by the side of their wives after the toils and hardships they have endured. If they are absolutely obliged to stay from home longer than a day, they prevail upon their wives to attend them, being unable to forego their company. The Kamtschadales, nevertheless, are not more constant than the other Siberian and

Mongol savages, making no scruple to abandon their wives, if they meet with women who please them better, or at least taking fresh ones in addition to those they had before; but as long as they continue to live with them, they are under the necessity of concealing their amours with the utmost precaution, though the women never give themselves the trouble to keep the favours they have bestowed on others a secret from their husbands.'

This authority of the women, and the corresponding subjection on the part of the men, which we find in Kamtschatka, must necessarily proceed from the physical qualities either of one sex or the other, or of both; and I think the following explanation of this singular phenomenon will not be very remote from the truth.

The women of Kamtschatka have, it is true, all the distinguishing characteristics of the Mongol features: large heads, flat faces, depressed noses, little eyes, thick lips, and prominent cheek-bones; but according to all appearance, they retain their freshness much longer than the other Siberian women, for their small breasts continue tolerably firm even at the age of forty. They incontestably possess a greater portion of beauty, and a more

blooming colour than the females of all or most of the other Mongol tribes. Owing to the favourable temperature of their climate, the women of Kamtschatka have a complexion as delicate as those of Europe, and their cheeks frequently display the vivid glow of health. They not only surpass the other Siberian females in beauty, but their intellectual qualities are of a higher order than those of the latter, or even of their husbands, and to this superiority of talents, Steller himself ascribed the extraordinary influence which they have obtained over their husbands. To these exclusive advantages possessed by the women, must be added the negro-like lechery of the men, which is so great, that the embraces of their wives are not less necessary to them than their daily food. As the men, therefore, from the violence of their sensual appetite are attracted to the other sex more powerfully than other Siberian savages, and are more strongly attached to their women by the superiority of their charms; it is not surprising that they should be reduced by the talents peculiar to the latter, to the abject state I have already described.

Nothwithstanding all the advantages

which the Kamtschadale women possess over their Siberian sisters, and even over their husbands, they still belong to the same class as the latter, and with them form an intermediate species of half-civilized people, who are destitute of many human perfections by which nations of a superior cast are distinguished. The women of Kamtschatka are equally devoid of modesty with the men, and like them, not only indulge the most unnatural lusts in a public manner, and even in the presence of children, but are also publicly delivered, and resign themselves to the embraces of their husbands and lovers, like irrational animals, without betraying the least sense of shame. So brutal, and so irresistible is their appetite, so totally destitute are they of modesty or fidelity, that they abandon their persons to every comer; for which reason Steller says of them, that they are wives to all the men, as the men are husbands to all the women. Their insatiable lust causes them to prefer the more robust and vigorous Cossacks and Russians, to their weaker countrymen, whom they treat with sovereign contempt; and on this account they betrayed to their foreign conquerors almost all the conspiracies pro-

jected by their fathers, their husbands, and their brothers*.

On the first occupation of the country, many of the Cossacks collected a harem of ten, twenty, or thirty women, whom they staked at play like money, or any other article of property. In this manner, a female was often won and lost three or four times in the course of an evening, and immediately taken possession of by the winner. This degrading treatment, instead of irritating these patient creatures, gave them such satisfaction, that when fortune decreed against a change, they would run away in despair, and put an end to their lives. So lately as the period of Steller's visit to their country, it was impossible to prevail upon any woman of Kamtschatka, by the greatest promises or rewards, to do needle-work, to wash, or

* *Steller.* The description of the extraordinary conformation of the sexual organs both of the men and women, which differ materially from those of Europeans, and are probably constituted in the same manner among all the Mongol nations as among the Kamtschadales, afforded Steller the principal ground of conjecture respecting the reason why the women of Kamtschatka are much more attached to the Europeans than to their own countrymen. But even the wives and concubines of the Cossacks are so far from divesting themselves of their former propensities, that they bestow their favours as before, on every man they meet.

to render any other little offices of a like nature: the only way to engage the performance of these services was by the gratification of their sensual appetite, and the individual on whom it was conferred, never failed to boast of the honour all over the ostrog or village.

With the exception of the Kamtschadales, the sex probably experiences among the other heathen of Siberia the same treatment, as I shall presently shew that it receives from the Americans: but our information respecting the women of Siberia is less authentic and circumstantial than concerning those of America. It is, however, not worth our while to collect all the accounts of the latter that have been given by travellers. The inhabitants of no other division of the globe so strongly resemble each other in every respect as the Aborigines of the new world; and were we, therefore, to describe the condition of the sex among all the nations of America with which we are acquainted, it would be just as ridiculous as to exhibit to a person a prodigious number of copies of the same picture, one after the other. To me it appears much more judicious, to give some of the most faithful and circumstantial descriptions of the condition of the female

sex, both in the northern and southern division of the American continent, introducing or subjoining notices of the slight deviations and exceptions which occasionally occur.

Among the Greenlanders, who may justly be termed own brothers to the Esquimaux and other Americans, infancy is the only portion of life, which a female has not abundant cause to execrate. Till their fourteenth year, the only employment of girls consists in childish sports, singing, dancing, and conversation, which amusements are rather diversified than interrupted, by their attendance on children, and the fetching of water*.

From the age of fourteen to the period of marriage, which is seldom before they have completed their twentieth year, girls are instructed in female occupations, and begin, under the inspection of their mothers, to apply themselves to sewing, cookery, tanning, and even learn to navigate women's boats, and to construct houses. In all these employments unmarried females are not urged beyond their strength, or otherwise ill-used, either by their natural or foster-parents, or by

* *Cranz's* Greenland.

such families as have taken them into their service; for girls who have been adopted as children, or serve for their board and lodging, are at liberty, if discontented with their situation, to leave the houses of their protectors or masters whenever they please; and the latter would incur universal contempt if they used the least violence to their adopted daughters or maid-servants. Respecting marriage, the Greenlanders have no more notion of consulting their daughters than the Siberian savages. Parents frequently betroth their children in their tenderest infancy. But when this is not the case, a father promises his daughter to the first suitor that applies, and whether she likes him or not, she is obliged to obey. Very frequently indeed, it proceeds from mere coquetry that young females, who are perfectly satisfied with their lovers, on receiving the first proposals of marriage, utter a violent shriek, tear their plaited hair, and run away from the hut. These signs of aversion to marriage are, however, not rarely undissembled, and not a few instances have been known of girls running away into the deserts, or even cutting off their hair, the loss of which, in Greenland, is regarded as the greatest deformity and disgrace, after

which a female has nothing more to fear from the importunities of suitors. When a girl does not manifest such a violent antipathy to matrimony, she is sought by the female match-makers and their assistants, who drag her by force to the habitation of the bridegroom. There they sit for some days with dejected looks, and dishevelled hair, and without taking any sustenance. When their patience is exhausted with the duration and obstinacy of the bride's grief, they compel her with blows to surrender her person to the young man; and to him and his mother she becomes a slave from the moment this change takes place in her condition. From their twentieth year, says Cranz, the lives of the women are a continued series of hardships and misery. The occupations of the men solely consist in hunting and fishing; but so far from giving themselves the trouble to carry home the fish they have caught, they would think themselves eternally disgraced by such a condescension. The men, it is true, make their implements for fishing and hunting, and construct the frames of their boats; but even these the women are obliged to cover. With the exception of the wood-work, it is also their duty to build houses and tents, and to keep them

in repair. When the women are carrying stones for their winter habitations, and are ready to sink under their burden, the men look on with the utmost indifference, not rendering even the smallest assistance to alleviate their labour. Besides this, it falls exclusively to the lot of the women to kill, to cook provisions, to tan the skins of animals, and with these, when properly prepared, to make clothes, shoes, and boots for their husbands and children; and all these things they are obliged to do with so few instruments, and those so simple, or so imperfect, that the most skilful workmen in Europe would be far surpassed by them if they had no better. Amid all this laborious and incessant drudgery, the poor women are frequently subject to the ill-treatment of their mothers-in-law, who are absolute mistresses in the houses of their married sons; and receive still more from their husbands, who are never guilty of violence except towards their wives: neither is it seldom the case, that they are under the necessity of living with one or more quarrelsome rival favourites who, as in Kamtschatka, are sometimes carried off by surprize. They are moreover in continual danger of being repudiated by their husbands, especially if they should not have

children soon after their marriage. When a woman is thus put away, she is generally necessitated to enter into the service of other Greenlanders, where she receives better treatment, indeed, than in the hut of her husband, but is not sure for a moment of her situation and subsistence. On the other hand, if the husband dies and leaves his wife with an infant family, it is an extremely fortunate event for the widow if she can obtain a service with her children, not only for the sake of the support which they require, but also on account of the fear entertained by her employer lest, when her children, and especially her sons are grown up, they should forsake him, and thus leave their former protector in a helpless situation. Widows who have no near relations, are robbed of all, or of the best part of their property, by those who come to their hut to testify their affected regret, even during the most violent paroxysms of their grief, when prostrate upon the ground with their children they are bemoaning the loss of a husband and a father. The widows and orphans who are thus scandalously plundered, find neither laws, nor judges, nor friends, whose compassion prompts them to avenge the injustice they have suffered. On the contrary, they

are obliged to strive to insinuate themselves into the good graces of those who have clandestinely obtained the largest share of their property, in order that they may find a home with them. These thieves maintain the widows for a time, but soon becoming weary of them, turn them with their orphan children out of their hut. From one, or perhaps several families, they experience a similar reception; after which they are almost invariably driven away without the least ceremony, till at length every heart and every door is shut against them. In this state of total abandonment they live for a time on fish, muscles, and sea-weed; but having no one to catch seals for them, they soon perish of cold and hunger. This spectacle of expiring widows and orphans, the Greenlanders behold with as much indifference as though the sufferers were not human creatures, but beings of a different species. When we meet with these and similar traits of the odious cruelty and obduracy of the savages of Mongol origin, we cannot forbear deducing in our own minds this inference, that these uncivilized people are in many respects more malignant and more just objects of abhorrence than the most bloodthirsty among the beasts of prey.

When, however, women chance to have grown-up sons, their condition is enviable in comparison of the state of less fortunate females. In the first place they are not in danger of being repudiated; for the children, not excepting the adult sons, the sole support of age, follow the mother and not the father; nor do they return after the mother's death to the latter, who remains a perfect stranger to them. But when the fortunate mothers of grown-up sons lose their husbands, they are not only protected from the plunder of their neighbours, and slavery in the huts of strangers, but enjoy much greater liberty than during the life-time of their husbands. From an inexplicable singularity in the nature of most of the Mongol, and of all the American savages, the sons, who, in their childhood give themselves no concern about either of their parents, but often treat both ill, when they have arrived at maturity, pay the most profound respect and implicit obedience to the feebler sex; the widowed mother, therefore, continues to reside in the hut of her son, who pursues the paternal occupations with the boats and implements of his father; nay, whenever he marries she is even mistress over his wife. As mothers, however, are

not indebted for this authority to the natural affection of their sons, but to a prejudice or superstitious notion which has not yet been sufficiently investigated, they are liable to lose this authority, together with their lives, in consequence of another prejudice, and a different species of superstition. It is not uncommon for aged females, either from motives of interest, or because they actually believe themselves to be possessed of supernatural arts, to make pretensions to divination and magic. When they publicly practise their imaginary enchantments, or merely incur the suspicion of witchcraft, if the wife or child of a Greenlander happens to die, if his fowling-piece chances to miss fire, or his arrow not to hit the mark, this is sufficient to cause the supposed sorceress to be immediately stoned, or thrown into the sea, or cut in pieces by her neighbours at the instigation of the jealous *Angekoks*, or male magicians. There have even been instances of sons killing their mothers, and brothers dispatching their sisters with impunity in the presence of all the other inhabitants of the hut, if the unfortunate creatures had excited the suspicion of witchcraft. Mothers are likewise exposed to the danger of a violent death, when they

have attained to an advanced age, and from the infirmities attendant on it, become burdensome to themselves and others. In this case, they are sometimes at their own request, and sometimes without their consent, interred alive by the hands of their cruel offspring. In Greenland, as in the other regions of America, it has been observed, that the women, notwithstanding all the hardships and perils to which they are exposed, attain, upon an average, a much more advanced age than the men. Few Greenlanders survive the age of fifty years; the women, on the contrary, frequently live to seventy, eighty, or even more, if they are not left at any early period of life in the helpless state of widowhood, when they generally perish of hunger and cold.

Among the other savages of America, the condition of the female sex, is, with some slight variations, precisely the same as among the Greenlanders. By all they are regarded during the period of their courses, of pregnancy, of child-birth, and of suckling as impure and infectious; and as the American females suckle their children till the third, and not rarely till their sixth or seventh year, it is obvious that fruitful women, during the greatest part of their

lives are excluded from the commerce with their husbands, for which reason, many, when they find themselves pregnant, procure abortion*. Most of the savages of the new world offer strangers their wives and daughters†. Many of them betroth their children, particularly the girls, in their earliest infancy; and almost all dispose of them either for personal service during a stated term, or in exchange for certain commodities, without asking their daughters whether they are inclined to marry at all, or to be united to the men to whom they assign them. With the exception of those tribes among which the youth of both sexes cohabit without any ceremonies, and part again whenever they please, the nuptial rites are emblematic of the slavery to which they are consigned by their parents. In the northern regions of America it is customary to give the bride a collar formed of a leathern thong of considerable length and breadth, a kettle, and a pile of wood: the first to signify that she is to perform all the domestic drudgery; the second, that she is to dress the food of her husband and children, and the third,

* *Charlevoix, p.* 208, 303.

† *Bossu, p.* 249. *Carver, p.* 131. *History of the Buccaneers I.* 238. *Falkner, p.* 126. *Crantz, p.* 248.

that she is to carry all the wood*. In many countries it is even usual for the bride to collect, previous to the nuptials, a sufficient stock of wood for the ensuing winter. If we except hunting and fishing, the making of weapons, and the construction of canoes, the women are burdened with all the other concerns of domestic economy, both at home and abroad, so that they enjoy scarcely a moment's repose.

Very few of the savages assist the women either in the cultivation of the earth or in collecting the produce†. While the men occasionally go out to the chace with a musket or a light bow, the women are daily obliged to wander through the forests and morasses, often with one child in their arms and another at their back, in quest of plants, roots, and fruits‡; nay they are frequently compelled to labour in the fields with a new-born infant at the breast, exposed to torrents of rain, or the most intense heat, and with scarcely any nourishment whatever.§

* *Charlevoix, p.* 287.
† *Charlevoix, p.* 330. *Bonevere, p.* 112.
‡ *Gumilla, II, p.* 134.
§ *Voyages au Nord,* v. 48.

While the men return home at night without any burden, the women are sinking not only beneath the weight of the children and of the provisions they have found, but also of the game which their husbands have killed. This the poor wretches are frequently obliged to transport from great distances, their tyrants giving them no other information than indirect hints where to find it*. When, finally, the men on their return from the chase are amusing themselves with their acquaintance, carousing or quaffing *chica*, or reposing after their debauch, the unfortunate females are forced to pass great part of the night in fetching wood and water, and grinding maize, for the purpose of making a fresh supply of *chica*, the succeeding day. All these painful and incessant labours are rewarded with the most barbarous usage, to which in many countries these patient creatures are so accustomed, that they regard it as a proof of the affection of their husbands, and even provoke it by intentional misconduct when they think it has been too long withheld†. These dreadful labours, and this cruel treat-

* *Voyages au Nord*, v. 48.
† *Boyer*, *p.* 134.

ment have caused almost all the travellers, who have resided for any length of time among the savages, to consider the females of America as the most degraded portion of their whole sex*. These are the reasons which induce many of them prematurely to destroy the fruit of their womb, and either to break the necks of their new-born female children, or to bury them alive, that they may preserve their offspring from that misery by which they are themselves reduced almost to despair.† These labours, and this treatment are also incontestably the chief, or at least one of the principal reasons why the young American females have such an aversion to matrimony, and manifest this aversion nearly in the same manner as those of Greenland‡.

In America there are likewise certain nations, among which wives may leave their husbands, or husbands repudiate their wives with impunity: but among most of the savages who purchase wives by service, clothing, household effects, and other commodities, they are the property of their husbands, from whom they

* *Gumilla, II. p.* 134.
† *Ibid. p.* 234.
‡ *Dobrizhofer, II. p.* 214, 216.

have no more right to withdraw when they please, than slaves from their masters*. Notwithstanding the bridegroom sometimes cohabits a whole year, and even longer, with his bride after she has been delivered up to him, without consummating the marriage†, still the unnaturally cold American is by no means constant. Though at home he is contented with one female, yet abroad he finds and enjoys abundant variety in all the districts and villages which he visits, when engaged in the chace; for wherever he goes, parents are ready to give up their children, husbands their wives, and women and girls their own persons for a trifling consideration, to the first comer‡. Many savages, it is true, content themselves with one wife at a time, but they drive her away with her children whenever they think proper, so that, as Dobrizhofer informs us, they change their wives oftener than Europeans change their shirts§. In case

* See among other writers *du Tertre. II.* 376, 379. Among the Miamis, in North America, the husband formerly possessed the right of cutting off the nose of his wife wherever he found her, if she perfidiously deserted him. *Charlevoix, p.* 283, 284.

† *Ibid. p.* 286.

‡ *Voyages au Nord, v. p.* 287. *Charlevoix, p.* 283.

§ *Dobrizhofer, II. p.* 219.

the first wives are not sent away, they must submit to serve one, or several more youthful females, in the capacity of slaves*. As such they are obliged to labour not only for their younger rivals, but they dare not even complain if these think fit to beat their children, or to maltreat themselves, lest their former husbands, totally regardless of their services during an union of many years, should come to the aid of their insolent concubines.

Among the savages who admit of polygamy, the women are the most happy in those countries where each wife has a separate habitation, as is customary among the wives of the chiefs in Brasil†, or where, at least, the rights, privileges, and duties of the sex are established by ancient custom, as among the Caribs and the inhabitants of Chili. Among the latter, the wife who passed the preceding night with her husband, cooks for him the following day, saddles his horse, and performs the other domestic duties‡. Among the Caribs, each wife has her month, in which she regularly cohabits with the husband, attends to the business of the kitchen,

* *Charlevoix, p.* 283. *Cumilla, II. p.* 242.
† *Marcgraf, p.* 28.
‡ *Frezier, p.* 125.

and takes upon herself various other menial offices*. If a wife who is repudiated by her husband, or is parted from him by the hand of death, be still young, she readily finds a home for herself and her children; but, on the contrary, if she be old and infirm, the same fate awaits her as among the Greenlanders. Young widows, on the death of their husbands, do not recover their liberty, but devolve with the rest of their property to their family, by whom they may be sold or given away†; and as long as a male of the husband's family exists the widow cannot dispose of herself in marriage. The dependence of widows on the family of the husband, ceases, however, when they have adult sons; for then they are too old to to marry again, and are themselves regarded as the heads of families. Not only

* *Du Tertre, II. p.* 379. The Caribs of the West India islands speak three different languages. The first is appropriated to the women; it is understood by the men, but they never employ it, as they would think themselves disgraced by its use. The second is spoken by the men, and was probably brought by them from the continent; and the third is that used by the warriors and old men in secret consultations, the result of which is to be kept private from the women and young people. *Labat, VI. p.* 127.

† *Charlevoix, p.* 283, 284, 376.

are grown-up sons obedient to the mother alone, and all the children accompany her, when she is repudiated by her husband; but among some of the tribes of North America, the children belong, even during marriage wholly and exclusively to the mother; and though they consider the husband of their mother as the master of the hut, yet they treat him with as little respect as if he were the greatest stranger*. Among the Caribs, on the contrary, the sons, during infancy and youth, pay no kind of obedience either to the father or the mother. When, however, a father becomes old and infirm, the son receives him into his hut, where he is honoured as the master of the whole family. As such they are not addressed, like its other members, in the second person, but by way of respect, in the third†.

Throughout the whole continent of America there is not a tribe among which the most common accidents, and natural evils, are not ascribed to the effects of witchcraft, among which the practice of these magic arts is not attributed by the jugglers to old women, and in which old

* *Charlevoix, p.* 287.
† *Oldendorp I, p.* 23.

women are not in consequence murdered with impunity*. In South America there are even nations of cannibals, who devour not only their captive enemies, but slaughter their own wives and children, particularly the former, and when they are thoroughly fat, invite their friends and neighbours to the repast†.

The narratives of various travellers concerning female sovereigns, and the profound respect paid to the sex among various nations, seem to be totally at variance with the preceding accounts of the wretched condition of women in America. Both divisions of the new world, doubtless, contain some tribes that, according to appearance, are governed by females‡: and a still greater number, among whom every thing seems to be transacted in the name of the women, and who always consult them on the most important affairs. To this class, as Charlevoix was informed, belong in particular all the tribes of North America which subsist by hunting, and speak the Huron language. Among these

* See *Meiners'* History of Religions, under the head, *Zauberey* (Witchcraft).

† See *Meiners'* Inquiry concerning Cannibal nations, in the Commentaries of the Society of Gottingen.

‡ See among others *Bossu, p.* 42.

nations, the dignity of chieftain is hereditary, but only in the female line, so that not the son of the deceased leader, but his sister's son succeeds him as the head of his tribe. When the reigning line becomes extinct, the female highest in rank nominates a new sovereign. The women moreover select the counsellors appointed to assist each successive chief, and without whose approbation he must not venture upon any undertaking of importance. Sometimes, it is added, even women are included in the number of the counsellors of the head of the nation. When any important matter is to be taken into consideration, it is previously submitted to the discussion of an assembly of women, who communicate their opinion to the chief of the state, by whom it is then laid before the great council composed of the elders*. But, continues Charlevoix, if the women formerly possessed all these prerogatives, or if they are still allowed to retain them in appearance, the present practice by no means corresponds with the ancient customs, or with the *pro forma* proceedings of the men. Notwithstanding all affairs are transacted in the name of the women,

* *Charlevoix, p. 267, 269.*

and the chiefs wish to be considered only as their vicegerents, yet the men seldom confer with the women on subjects of importance, and entrust them with no more than what they think fit to communicate*. Moreover the condition of the women of those nations, in which they appear to have the greatest weight in public affairs, differs in no respect from the state of the sex among those tribes who deny their females not only the substance, but even the very shadow of respect. The one are slaves to the men as well as the others; both must alike perform the same drudgery and submit to the same harsh treatment*.

That nations who hold the sex in such supreme contempt, and subject them to such gross abuse as the Americans, should nevertheless invest females with the mock-government of the state, is a circumstance not difficult to be accounted for. It proceeds among the Americans, as among other nations, which have a like origin, and treat their women in a similar manner, from the jealousy of the chiefs who are unwilling to confer the sovereign power on any of their number, but chuse rather to place it in the hands of a weak woman

* *Charlevoix, p.* 287.

from whom they have no occasion to apprehend any abridgment of their authority. I am, nevertheless, utterly at a loss to conceive how such people as the savage Huron tribes could have bestowed on their oppressed and despised women, even in appearance only, the prerogatives that have been assigned them. If only certain females, or the women of certain families, were consulted upon public affairs, and possessed the right of electing the princes and their counsellors, these privileges might be accounted for on the same principle as those enjoyed by the wives and daughters of the reigning houses among the Natchez, and other similar tribes. But as they are said to be common to the whole sex, I am unable to discover in the sentiments and disposition of the American savages one single datum from which to deduce the mysterious mock-privileges of their women.

Among the Natchez and some neighbouring tribes, the reigning families regarded themselves as descendants of the sun, and were accordingly venerated by their subjects as supernatural beings. As it was customary among these tribes for the son, not of the deceased prince, but of his nearest female relative, to succeed to the

sovereign authority, which was consequently transmitted in the female line, all the wives and daughters of the reigning family shared in the divine honours paid to the sovereign*. The mother of the prince, or the *Sun* (for this name was given to the chiefs of the Natchez, as well as to the Incas of Peru) was during her life, and more particularly after death, an object of equal, nay perhaps still greater veneration than her despotic son. On the graves even of other princesses, fathers were sometimes sacrificed by their own offspring, if they were of low birth, and not of the royal blood. All the daughters of princes possessed the power of life and death; and if any one had the misfortune to incur their displeasure, they might cause him to be dispatched on the spot by their guards. If any of these princesses conferred on a commoner the honour of selecting him for her husband, the latter was obliged to pay his illustrious consort the most implicit obedience, and to observe the most inviolable fidelity, for, on the slightest appearance of contumacy or inconstancy, these females might cause their husbands to be executed like

* *Charlevoix, p.* 421, and following pages.

other common men. They, on the contrary, considered it as a prerogative entailed with their celestial descent, to act and live just as they pleased, while their abject husbands were denied the right of complaining, or of calling them to account*.

In the two principal empires of the new world, which were overturned by the Spaniards soon after its discovery, the condition of the other sex resembled that of the women of the south of Asia: but in Mexico wives and daughters were less dependent than in Peru, where the most arbitrary despotism had annihilated the most sacred natural rights of parents. In Mexico daughters were sold, it is true, by their fathers, but they received a dowry proportionate to the rank and ability of their parents, which remained their inviolable property. As the husband was at liberty to repudiate his wife whenever he pleased, so the wife might part, if she thought fit, from her husband, and in either case she received back her dowry, and divided the children with her husband, taking the daughters herself and leaving him the sons. Married people

* *Charlevoix, p.* 421, and following pages.

were prohibited from living together again, after separation, upon pain of death*.

In Peru, fathers had not the smallest authority over their children, at least in any thing that related to marriage. At certain periods, the reigning Inca ordered all the marriageable youth of both sexes, as well those of the royal race as the children of the principal families in the empire, to be assembled, and united them with each other. The same mode was followed by the governors of cities and villages, without paying the least regard to the wishes of the parents, the inclinations of the young people, or the closest ties of consanguinity. Females, who were thus allotted to the high and the low, by the venerated sovereign, or his vicegerents, were alone entitled to the privileges of legitimate wives. They alone mourned after the death of the husband, and probably they were also honoured as the mothers of the children of their husband's concubines, as was customary in the south of Asia. Besides his lawful wife, every man might take as many concubines as he pleased. If a wife intrigued with any other man, both the seducer and the adultress were punished

* *Acosta, p.* 246, 247.

with death, unless her husband interceded for her, and consented to forgive her fault. In this case, she did not escape without punishment, though the sentence of death was remitted*. The labours of agriculture were performed by the joint exertions of the common people and their wives; but yet there were provinces in which the women cultivated the earth, while the men were engaged at home in female occupations. The wives of the great were as closely confined in Peru as in Mexico, and principally employed themselves in the spinning and weaving of wool and cotton. Among the lower classes also, the manufacture of stuffs, for apparel, fell to the lot of the women; while the men undertook the making of coverings for the legs and feet, an employment of which even the princes of the reigning house were not ashamed. Widows with children never married again, and those who had none very rarely. A natural consequence of the mode in which young people were married in Peru was this, that the fathers gave themselves less concern about dowries for their children than in any other

* *Acosta*, Liv. VI. c. 18. *Garcilasso*, Liv. IV. c. 6, and 13.

country. The habitations of newly married Incas, or princes and princesses of the reigning house, were erected by the subjects of the provinces to whom this labour was assigned; but the household furniture and the other necessaries and conveniences, the nearest relations were obliged to supply. The relatives of the newly-married of the other classes, were expected to make a similar provision: but the houses of all the young people were constructed at the expence of the city or community to which they belonged,—a circumstance, which alone is sufficient to justify the inference, that these habitations were as wretched as can well be conceived.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Condition of the Female Sex among the Negro Nations of Africa.

In treating of the negroes of Africa, it is necessary to make a distinction between such as are blacks only in complection, and those whose whole organization of body and mind proclaim them to be of genuine negro origin. The former are undoubtedly descended either from the Moors or the Abyssinians, to whom they bear a perfect resemblance in their exterior conformation, and especially in all the principal features of the face. These handsome blacks are much more intelligent, well-disposed, cleanly, industrious, and polished than the plainer tribes, who exhibit all the characteristics of the Mongol figure. They hold virginity in request, pay higher prices for their brides, give more considerable dowries, celebrate their nuptials with greater pomp, and lay more stress upon the fidelity of their wives than the homely negroes, who resemble the Americans not only in features and gene-

ral appearance, but also in disposition and manners, and especially in their treatment of the sex.

Among these ugly blacks, or negroes, properly so called, fathers and husbands have as much power over their daughters and wives as the natives of America. It is a practice equally, nay perhaps still more common among the negroes than among the Americans, to offer their wives and daughters to Europeans, and they account it a high honour when either the one or the other are pregnant by these strangers*. The fathers find a more certain market for the charms of their daughters, since neither a multitude of favoured lovers, nor repeated proofs of fecundity are attended with any disgrace, but on the contrary, are considered as recommendations in unmarried females; on which account they do not always wait for the commands of their parents to make a lover happy, but gratify their inclinations sometimes with no other view than to lay up a little property by way of dowry. Parents sell their daughters not only to

* *Dampier, II. p.* 86. *Flacourt, p.* 85. *Gentil, II. p.* 515. *Pages, II. p.* 104. *Des Marchais, I. p.* 103, *II.* 177. *Lobo, p.* 27. *Cavazzi, I. p.* 226. *Loyer, p.* 71. *Labat, V. p.* 67. *Bosmann, p.* 33, 242, 249.

lovers, but to suitors of any kind, without doubting or even asking their consent; for to the female negroes and Americans, one young fellow of their tribe is equally acceptable with another, in like manner as the men seldom make any distinction on the score of beauty among a number of women of the same age. The negroes in general receive for their daughters a few bottles of brandy, and at the farthest a few articles of wearing apparel, and when these prices are paid, the fathers conduct their willing children to the huts of the purchasers*. Immediately on entering the hut, the bridegroom commands the youthful bride to fetch water, or wood, or any thing else that is wanted†, in order to accustom her at the very commencement of their union to that subjection which she owes to her lord. A negro may love his wife with all the affection that it is possible for a negro to possess, but he never permits her to eat with him, because he would imagine himself contaminated, or his dignity lessened by such a condescension; and at this degrading

* *Des Marchais, II. p.* 178. *Snellgrave, p.* 210. *Proyart, I. p.* 68.

† *Labat, II. p.* 299.

distance, the very negro slaves in the West Indies keep their wives, though it might be presumed that the hardships of their common lot would have tended to unite them in the closest manner*. The poorest and meanest negro, even though he be a slave, is generally waited upon by his wife, as by a subordinate being, on her knees.—On their knees the negro women are obliged to present to their husbands tobacco and drink; on their knees they salute them when they return from hunting or any other expedition; lastly, on their knees they drive away the flies from their lords and masters while they sleep†. At the time of menstruation they are not permitted to enter the huts of their husbands, and during the periods of pregnancy and suckling, the latter of which they prolong to two or three years, they are totally excluded from the conjugal embrace.

There are districts contiguous to the Senegal, in which both sexes are jointly engaged in agricultural avocations‡. It is

* *Labat, II. p. 299. Adanson, p. 32. Oldendorp, I. p. 376.*

† See the authors above-mentioned, and *Moore, p. 86.*

‡ *Moore, p. 90.*

also true that rich negro women are sometimes attended by slaves, male and female, without being obliged to perform any kind of drudgery*: but among most of the negro nations all the labours both of the house and field are imposed, as in America, upon the women. The husband, besides constructing his weapons and implements, likewise keeps the hut in repair, and occasionally makes clothes and ornaments for his wives. His principal occupations, however, consist in hunting and fishing; the produce of these excursions he divides in equal parts among all his wives, or if it be too little, he gives the whole of it to her whose day or whose week it is to superintend his kitchen. The women, on the other hand, are obliged not only to wait upon the husband, to take care of their children, and in general to carry one of them at the breast, even when engaged in the most laborious employments, but it is likewise their duty to gather cotton, and manufacture it into clothing for themselves, their children, and their husband; to cultivate and reap the crops, of maize, millet, tobacco, and rice; to prepare food and drink; to keep the huts clean; to attend the domestic animals,

* *De Momet, II. p.* 44.

and to fetch wood and water. From these occupations not even the wives and concubines of kings are in general exempted, but they may be seen labouring in the fields like the rest of their country-women*.

It is much more common among the negroes than among the frigid Americans, to have several young wives at once, whose condition, privileges, and duties vary exceedingly among the different African nations. These deviations must be ascribed either to the imitation of neighbouring Mahometans, or to their being descended from tribes, who, though black, cannot with propriety be called negroes, such as the Moors and Abyssinians. Among many negro nations all young wives enjoy equal prerogatives, and bear an equal portion of the drudgery. Each wife has a hut to herself, receives an equal portion of the produce of the husband's hunting or fishing expeditions, and provides for him at her own habitation, or repairs to his, when it is her week or month to taste the joys of matrimony, and to manage her husband's domestic concerns†. All their children

* *Proyart, p.* 85. *Labat, II. p.* 301.
† *Labat, V. p.* 326.

too, inherit, in equal proportions. In other countries, on the contrary, either the first wife, or she who has brought the husband the first son, enjoys privileges superior to those of the other wives and concubines*. This fortunate female may be considered as the mistress of all the rest; she keeps all the keys, superintends the whole household, assigns tasks to the slaves and concubines, and sleeps three nights with her husband, to one in which the other wives are indulged with his company. Women under these circumstances cannot be divorced or sold, except in case of adultery; and in some countries they even possess such influence, that the husband dares not take a fresh concubine without their consent, which, however, they very readily give, as these concubines and their children constitute the principal wealth of the negroes†. For the rest, the common negroes, as well as their kings, manifest ingratitude not less horrible than the Americans. When wives and concubines survive their charms, and the period of fecundity, they are

* *De Marchais, I. p.* 139, 286, 287. *Labat, II. p.* 301. *De Momet, II. p.* 53, 54.

† *Bosman, p.* 239, &c. *Loger, p.* 139.

obliged to perform the offices of menials to their youthful rivals, or are even sold for slaves. The King of Whida himself formerly sent the concubines of whom he was weary, by whole dozens to market, to be disposed of to the Europeans*.

None of the wives, except the first, is secure from the apprehension of being sold into slavery to the Europeans; and to that fate the first themselves are sometimes doomed, even though the negroes have solemnly sworn not to dispose of them in this way. The wives of the negroes are, moreover, in continual danger of being divorced by their husbands†, though they are bound by indissoluble chains to the footstool of their lords. When the negroes repudiate their wives, they are also at liberty to drive away all their children, but at the same time they possess the right of retaining which they please, and even of taking them back long after the divorce‡. In Madagascar, a repudiated wife is not permitted to marry

* *De Momet, II. p.* 64, 70.

† *Moore, p.* 94. *De Momet, II. p.* 74. *Flacourt, p.* 104. *Labat and des Marchais,* in the places already quoted.

‡ *Moore, p.* 94.

again till she has repaid her former husband the price he gave for her previous to their union*.

The husband is the sole and supreme arbiter in all disputes between his wives. The contending parties on their knees explain their respective cases, while the husband listens cross-legged with all the gravity befitting a judge. As soon as he has pronounced sentence, the accuser and the accused retire with the most respectful silence, and submit, without murmur or complaint, to his decision†.

This judicial and domestic authority which the African negroes exercise over their wives, is not sufficient for the Mandingos; but all the men have entered into a horrible covenant, and established a secret tribunal against the women, which is not surpassed in cruelty by the Spanish Inquisition. In the first place they have, like the Caribs, a mysterious language,‡ which is used only on certain occasions, when they are about to wreak their vengeance on the women. Were a female by any means to make herself mistress of this language, the moment the men dis-

* *Flacourt*, *p.* 104.
† *Proyart*, *I. p.* 84.
‡ *Moore*, *p.* 28, 82.

covered her proficiency, she would inevitably be put to death without mercy for such treasonable profanation of their sacred mysteries. A secret order, founded for the purpose of imposing restraint, and inflicting punishment on female culprits, is equally inaccessible. Into this confederacy, no youths under the age of sixteen years are admitted, and each member, at his initiation, is obliged to swear the most tremendous oath, not to reveal the secrets of the order to any profane person, especially of the other sex. The violation of this vow, even by men of the highest rank, is invariably punished with death*. An instance of this occurred in 1727. A king of Jagra had communicated the objects and designs of the order to a favourite wife, who was imprudent enough to communicate to some of her female friends the dangerous secret with which she was entrusted, so that at length it reached the ears of the other members. The king and his consort were instantly summoned before the tribunal of the order, convicted of the crime, and executed without delay.

The terrific representative and judge, or avenger of the order, is a kind of hob-

* *Moore, p.* 82, 83.

goblin, which the women actually believe to be a wild man, or pretend to take for such, because they find it most prudent to disguise their real sentiments. This figure, known by the appellation of Mumbo Jumbo, is a man disguised in clothes made of the bark of trees, and with a crown or bunch of straw on his head, which increases his apparent height to eight or nine feet. This spectre, in order to produce the more powerful impression, appears only by night, and with hideous yells which might be taken for the cries of some unknown wild beast. When the women are informed by these terrific sounds of the approach of Mumbo Jumbo, they run away with the utmost precipitation. The disguised judge directs the attendants, by whom he is surrounded, to pursue the fugitives, and to bring back those who have deserved chastisement. These are either scourged or dispatched on the spot, for all the negroes who accompany the spectre are compelled to pay instant and implicit obedience to his orders*. To this description of the treatment of the sex among the negroes, we need only subjoin the account of various

* *Moore, p.* 82, 83.

writers of credit and veracity, who report, that in the southern portion of Africa, many princes and chieftains keep great numbers of young girls, not merely to gratify their passion, but to satiate their tiger-like appetite for human flesh, in order to convince ourselves, that the fate of the black women of Africa is not less severe than the condition of the brown females of the American continent.

For such a coincidence in the principles and conduct of the inhabitants of two divisions of the globe, who are neither directly descended from the same stock, nor have ever had the slightest intercourse with each other, it is impossible to account in any other way than by ascribing it to a most extraordinary analogy in the original constitution and organization of these people. The resemblance, or rather the identity of the nature of the Americans and negroes, is manifest not only in the circumstances that have already been noticed, but also in this, that the negroes suffer themselves, exactly like the Americans, to be governed by their wives, and to be maltreated by the daughters of their princes.

The daughters of the negro kings*

* *Proyart, I.* 80, 82, 121.

possess the twofold right to chuse whomsoever they please out of the whole nation, and to restrict these husbands from taking any other wives or concubines. As this condition is thought too severe by the males of royal blood, it seldom happens that any of them aspires to an union with a princess. Even common negroes dread the honour of being selected as husbands by the daughters of kings; but when it is offered them, they dare not refuse it, on pain of losing their liberty, or even their lives. The wedding-day, as Proyart observes, is the dying day of the freedom of such negroes, who are rather the slaves and the prisoners, than the husbands of their illustrious consorts. While married princesses are at liberty to live just as they please, their unfortunate husbands are prohibited not only from all commerce with other women, but very often they dare not even look at them. Jealous or domineering princesses never suffer their husbands to go abroad without a numerous retinue, who are directed to drive away all the females whom they may meet with on the road. If, notwithstanding this precaution, any strange woman should approach these men who are so carefully guarded, or only engage their attention,

their ruin would be inevitable, and they would be executed with every mark of disgrace. The husbands would share the same fate if they proved unfaithful to their mistresses; nay, even the purest innocence cannot prevent the husbands of princesses from being strangled, or at least divorced by their inconstant wives. In the latter case, they cannot marry again, or cohabit with their former wives, from whom they were taken by force, till they have obtained permission from the sovereign. As these princesses may do any thing with impunity, and pardon no offence against themselves, it is not surprising that they should inspire no less terror than their kings, and be shunned and detested even still more than they.

It is not the daughters of kings and princesses alone that exercise unlimited power over their husbands; the priestesses of various deities, and especially those of the great serpent in Whida*, possess the same authority. These last are regarded as the wives or daughters of the supreme deity of the country, and the respect which is paid them, suffers no diminution from the irregularity of their lives. The husbands of these priestesses

* *Bosmann, p.* 463. *Des Marchais, II. p.* 146.

of the great serpent dare not presume to give any orders to their wives, or to reprimand, or punish them. If a husband were to lose sight of that respect which is due to his sacred spouse, she and her colleagues would soon dispatch the culprit, who would not have the courage to make the least effort in his own defence against the violence of his holy assailants. The previous subjection of the priestesses, derogates nothing from the authority which they assume over their husbands. Even if they have been raised from slavery to the sacred function, their husbands are obliged to wait upon them with the same humility, and in the same kneeling attitude as the rest of their countrymen are accustomed to receive the attendance of their wives.

The same unlimited authority which the daughters of kings, and the priestesses of the great serpent in particular exercise over their husbands, was, and is still exercised over whole nations by the queens of many countries in Africa*. The negro queens differ from the princesses of America, and most of the regions of southern Asia in this particular, that they are not

* *Des Marchais, I. p. 220. Smith, p. 209. Cavazzi, II. p.* 105, &c.

queens merely in name, but govern the most warlike and blood-thirsty nations in the same arbitrary manner as the greatest despots of Africa. In order to retain the sovereign authority secure and undivided, these negro-queens never marry; they content themselves with taking to their bed partners whom they can dismiss or destroy whenever they think fit. That none of their sons or subjects may conceive the idea of usurping the throne, they have made a law, restricting the succession to the female line. This extraordinary power, and peculiar prerogatives, cannot be supported without masculine energies and talents; and accordingly, all the writers who treat of the queens of the negro nations of Africa, attest that they not only head their troops themselves in battle, but fight with equal, if not greater intrepidity than men.

To the nations who, formerly at least, were ruled with despotic power by females, belong the Gagers, the most savage and ferocious of all the cannibal tribes of Africa, and even of the world.

These Gagers* achieved the greatest conquests under the government of queens;

* *Cavazzi, II.* 105.

from queens they received their constitution and laws, which so far from appearing to have been framed by a man, much less by a female, seem more congenial with the nature of the tiger: it is indeed, scarcely possible to conceive that they can ever be observed. It was a queen who commanded her subjects to massacre all their enemies without mercy, and afterwards to quaff their blood, and feast upon their flesh. The same queen ordered that no woman should, on pain of death, be delivered in the camp; that under the same penalty, no twins, no children with natural infirmities, and in general, no male infants should be reared; and if some were secreted immediately after the birth, contrary to the laws of this despotic sovereign, that such of them at least as cut the upper teeth before the lower, should be dispatched without mercy, because it was predicted that the state of the Gagers would be overthrown by persons of that description. When the queen promulgated this unnatural decree, dooming all the male children of her warriors to destruction, in order to ensure their ready compliance, she directed her only son, an infant at the breast, to be brought forward in the presence of the whole army, threw

him into a mortar, and pounded him, unmoved by the cries of the infant, or the horrid spectacle of the mangled relics of the innocent victim. When she had reduced the body of her child to a shapeless mass, she mingled with it various kinds of herbs, powders, leaves, and oils, set it over a fire, and prepared an ointment which she declared would render her invulnerable. This assurance, and the example of their queen overcame the feelings of nature in all the warriors of both sexes, who followed the standard of this crowned female monster. All the new-born or infant males in the whole camp were slaughtered, and this practice was continued for many years. Among the negro women to whom Cavazzi administered baptism, some acknowledged with tears that they had killed five, others seven, and others again ten children with their own hands.

Notwithstanding the despotic authority of the legislatrix of the Gagers, she was unable, even by the strictest prohibition to restrain her warriors from regaling themselves with the flesh of women. Rich and powerful chieftains continued to keep whole flocks of young girls as they would of lambs, calves, or any other ani-

mals, and had some of them daily slaughtered for the table; for the Gagers prefer human flesh to every other species of animal food, and among the different classes of human kind, they hold that of young females in particular estimation*.

* *Cavazzi, II. p.* 123.

CHAPTER III.

On the Condition of Women among the Inhabitants of Mongolia and the South of Asia; also in the Islands of the East Indies and South Sea.

In the condition of the fair sex among the primitive pastoral tribes of Mongolia, and the nations of southern Asia who are descended from them, as also among the inhabitants of the East India and South Sea islands, there is as great a disparity as among the negroes, and the savages of America and Siberia. In the many large nations in the south of Asia, the state of the women is still more wretched than among the Americans and negroes. In others, their condition is more tolerable, and some, like the Kamtschadales, submit to be governed and ill-treated by their wives.

Among the great Mongolian nations on the continent of Asia, the Calmucks deserve the character of treating the sex with the greatest indulgence and respect. Even among this people, the fathers, it is true,

dispose of their daughters without their consent, and it is not uncommon to promise the infant in the womb, provided at its birth, it proves to be a female*: but, on the other hand, they give them a dowry at least equal in value to the price which the lover pays for his bride; and these dowries the fathers are by express laws enjoined to assign to their children†. The price of a bride among the Calmucks is considerable. For the daughter of a prince, for instance, it consists of thirty camels, fifty horses, and four hundred sheep, and for the daughter of a common man in easy circumstances, of fifteen horses and cows, three camels, and twenty sheep. As the dowry is equal in value to the consideration given for the bride, and as these dowries devolve to the widows on the decease of their husbands, and become their property in case of divorce, it is obvious, that in consequence of this liberal provision, the Calmuck women are less exposed to the danger of arbitrary divorces, or at least when repudiated or left widows, they are secured from actual want. The wives of the Calmucks, it is true, must be

* *Pallas Reisen, I. p.* 361, 362

† *Pallas Mongolische Völkerschaften, I. p.* 200.

content to share the possession of their husbands with numerous rivals; for the princes and chiefs of that nation have large harems or seraglios. Their laws and customs, however, make a material distinction between legitimate wives and mere concubines; and she, alone, is considered as the lawful wife who brought her husband a dowry, and whose union with him has been sanctioned by the Lamas, or priests*. The Calmucks are not exempted from the absurd notion entertained by the other Asiatic nations, that women communicate infection or pollution during their periodical indispositions, and after child-birth. In the latter case, in particular, the women are obliged to keep themselves apart from their husbands, and are not permitted to touch either their food or utensils till after ablution; but at the end of three weeks, the Calmucks again consider their wives as pure and harmless; they never shun them during the time of suckling, which is sometimes prolonged to four or five years, render them every assistance in their power in child-birth, and pay no attention to the periodical infirmities of unmarried females,

* *Lepechin's Reisen, I. p. 297.*

which they think of no signification*. The Calmucks resemble other nations of the same origin in this respect, that the labours they impose upon women are more numerous and more diversified than the duties which they retain for themselves. It is, nevertheless, but just to acknowledge, that they have charged their females with fewer avocations, and that these less laborious offices they more frequently alleviate or divide with them than the Siberian heathen, or the Americans and negroes†. The women take care of the cattle, and in particular of the young domestic animals, attend to the cookery of the family, distil *kumyss*, a species of brandy, from mare's milk, shear the sheep, tan hides, manufacture felts and stuff, not only for clothing, but also for covering their huts and tents, make ropes, and take down and erect their habitations. The men on the other hand, make all their weapons, implements, and equipage for riding; feed and water their herds and flocks, when not engaged in the chace; repair or improve their dwellings; slaughter the cattle which they require

* *Pallas Mong. Völk. I. p.* 165.

† *Ibid. I.* 143. *Pallas Reisen, I. p.* 314. *Lepechin, I. p.* 140, 141.

for their subsistence; cut up the flesh for drying; collect and cleave wood for fuel; and very often assist their wives in taking down, packing and erecting their tents, and in other domestic duties. But what confers the greatest honour on the Calmucks, is the respect and indulgence which is shewn to the sex, even in their laws, the unsophisticated effusions of their national spirit. All injuries done to women, are punished with greater severity than the same offences committed against men capable of defending themselves*. When women apply personally to a prince, and implore the remission of any punishment which either they or theirs are sentenced to suffer, their petition is granted without reserve, if the penalty be trivial, or if it be more severe, it is mitigated one-half. Finally, a woman, if she remains at home in her appropriated place, without quitting her habitation, is, in some sort an inviolable character. A female, at her domestic post, may be as abusive as she pleases to a stranger, or even throw wood or household utensils at him, without fear of retaliation†. Though these

* *Pallas Mongol. Völk. I. p.* 194.
† *Ibid.*

customs and sentiments form such a striking distinction between the Calmucks and the other nations of the same family, yet they nearly resemble the latter in their want of jealousy, in their generous disposal of the favours of their wives, and in the facility with which they may be appeased by faithless partners of their bed, and their paramours*. An injured husband, among the Calmucks, is satisfied on receiving from his adulterous wife four head of cattle, and five from the seducer, as though it were to compensate some damage done to his herds or habitation. If, however, any one violates by force the honour of a female, the perpetrator of the offence is obliged to bear the whole penalty attached to it, and to give nine head of cattle to the injured party†.

In China, Siam, and almost all the other countries in the south of Asia‡, the condition of the sex, and especially of the concubines, is so truly deplorable, that it cannot fail to awaken the sensibility of the European reader, though he is at the same time convinced, that the stupid, uniform-

* *Pallas Mongol. Völk. I. p.* 105, 106.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Du Halde, II.* 141, &c. *Loubère, I.* 160. *Borbinais, II.* 80, &c.

ed, and abject Chinese women are less alive to the wretchedness of their situation, than the sympathetic native of a remote region of the globe while perusing a description of it. The Chinese, like the Calmucks, their parent stock, frequently betroth their sons and daughters even previous to their entrance into the world, and sell or marry both without their consent. Females, who receive from their parents a dowry equal to the price paid for them by their bridegrooms, are thereby invested, it is true, with all the rights of legitimate wives, and a tyrannic authority over all the husband's concubines and their children; but nevertheless, they are themselves obliged to pay the same blind and implicit obedience to the husband as the sons yield to their fathers, and the subjects to their sovereigns*. As the Chinese, contrary to the custom of the Calmucks and Mongols, and even of most of the nations of southern Asia, are jealous to such a degree, that they permit their wives to receive no visitors of the other sex, and remove them from place to place, in strong vehicles secured with iron bars, the women indeed, continue as unpolished as when they were

* *Mémoires concernant les Chinois, III. p.* 368.

first taken from the hands of their mothers and attendants. On the other hand, however, they possess the advantage of being exempted from the labours of the field, and other painful avocations that are incompatible with such rigid seclusion*. If, notwithstanding the care with which she is guarded, a wife is guilty of infidelity to her husband, he has a right to kill the adultress in the presence of her relations†. Divorces are rare in China, Siam‡, and the neighbouring countries, but if the observation or information of Loubére be correct, the husbands in Siam never refuse to comply with the demand of their wives for a divorce, though they might if they pleased; and when such a separation takes place, the husband restores the wife's dowry, and divides the children with her in such a manner, that the first, third, fifth, and so on, fall to her lot, while he retains the second, fourth, sixth, &c. From this mode of division, if there be but one child, it belongs to the wife, and when the number is uneven, she obtains one more than the husband. This account, I am utterly incapable of reconciling with

* *Le Comte, II. p.* 73.
† *Hamilton, II. p.* 275.
‡ *Du Halde, II.* 143. *Loubére, I. p.* 161.

the cruel and selfish disposition of the southern Asiatics, and with the absolute power which husbands possess over their wives; for which reason I think it ought to be received with caution.

The first, or legitimate wives of the southern Asiatics are only treated with indignity, but the concubines are subject to every species of inhumanity, and are, in fact, more miserable, and more despised than even the female negroes and Americans. These unfortunate creatures* are in general the offspring of indigent parents, by whom they are sold at a higher or lower price, in proportion to their charms. They are not only slaves to the husbands, but also to the wives, both of whom exercise over them a despotic authority. Notwithstanding the number of children they may have borne their barbarous masters, notwithstanding the length and fidelity of the services they may have rendered, they are liable to be sold or gambled away by them whenever they please. The jealous wives frequently cause them to miscarry, and treat them in other respects with such cruelty, that the

* *Du Halde and Loubére, as above. Mémoires concern. les Chinois, II.* 80, 81, *III.* 368, *IV.* 288, 289.

husbands are obliged to remove their concubines to a different house, in order to release them from the persecution of their wives. All these barbarities are, however, much less revolting and unnatural than a practice which is in some measure sanctioned by the customs and laws of most of the nations in the south of Asia. The children of the concubines are regarded as the offspring of the legitimate wife, and even they consider themselves as such. They shew, therefore, not the least respect to their real mothers, frequently keep their seats when the latter are obliged to stand, manifest no sign of grief at their decease, and reserve all their affection for the legitimate wife, whom they are habituated to honour as their mother;—a custom which could not have obtained except among those nations in which a law could be promulgated, that mothers should cease to be mothers, that mothers should renounce the joys of maternal affection, and children the sweet duties of filial love. Not less abhorrent is the right given by the laws of China and Siam to the lawful wives and their sons, after the death of their husbands and fathers, over the concubines and their children. The former totally exclude the latter, the concubines

at least, from all share in the property left by the deceased, (for in some cases, the sons of concubines inherit as the adopted children of the legitimate wife), and may turn out or sell both, especially the concubines, for whom there is no redress. These laws and customs require no comment or illustration to enable the reader to draw this conclusion, that they presuppose a very different organization of human nature from what we find among the nations in our division of the globe.

Among the nations of the south of Asia and their descendants, it appears that the Javanese, all or most of whom derive their origin from the Chinese, are the only people who manifest equal, or still greater jealousy than the Chinese themselves, for among them, grown-up sons are not even permitted to see their own mothers*. Among the other East Indian nations there are, it is true, some who punish adulterers and adultresses with death, or the loss of liberty, but most of them may be pacified by presents, and even induced to acknowledge the offspring of adulterous commerce as their own. Excepting the Chinese and Javanese, all the nations of

* *Beschreibung von Batavia, I. p. 69.*

the south of Asia, and all the inhabitants of the East Indian and South Sea islands offer the Europeans their wives and daughters, or compel them to prostitute themselves to strangers: nor is this practice confined to the common people, but it is customary also among persons of the highest rank, who, like the negroes, esteem it an honour for their wives to become mothers by white men*. Those people who sell their wives and daughters, or exchange with each other†, like the inferior casts of Hindostan, according to the custom of other Mongol nations, do not indeed shut up their wives so closely as the Chinese and Javanese, but on the other hand they impose upon them all the drudgery which the female Americans and negroes are obliged to perform. Such is the condition of the sex among the meaner casts in Hindostan‡, in Ceylon§, in the regions of southern Asia, excepting China, and Java‖, and in the Molucca and Philippine islands¶. In all these countries

* *Dampier, II. p.* 6, 86. *Forster's Voyage, I. p.* 212, *II. p.* 71.

† *Voyages des Hollandois, III.* 675.

‡ *Ives, p.* 48.

§ *Knox, p.* 89, 94.

‖ *Dampier*, as above.

¶ *Pagés, I. p.* 382, 383. *Valentyn, II. p.* 147.

and islands the women are looked upon as so impure, that after child-birth they are obliged for several days, or sometimes four or five successive weeks, to fumigate and broil themselves before a fire, or even upon a gridiron. Such is the contempt in which they are held, that they are never permitted to eat, or merely to sit down in the presence of the men. Finally, they are abused in the most shameful manner, not only by their husbands, but also by their children, whom they dare not presume to punish for their conduct*. Mothers in Otaheite†, and probably in all the other South Sea islands, inhabited by people possessing personal beauty, have more authority over their children; they are not burdened with so many toilsome duties, and are exempted, in particular from the labours of the field‡: at the same time they are treated with such contempt, that they are not only prohibited to eat with their husbands, but

* This is asserted, with respect to certain casts of Hindostan, in the *Lettres Edifiantes, XII. p.* 81. *Nouv. Edit.* The English were themselves eye witnesses of this fact in New Zealand, where they saw a mother beaten by her husband for chastising her graceless boy, who had pelted her with stones. *Foster, I. p.* 510.

† *Forster's Observ. p.* 351.

‡ *Cook's Third Voyage, I. p.* 391.

are even excluded from partaking of the best dishes, and especially of animal food; neither are they permitted to enter the *morais*, or sacred burial places, the only temples of the South Sea islanders*.

In China, and all the other regions of the south of Asia, whose inhabitants have the same origin, or at least the same form of government, religion, customs, and system of education as the Chinese, fathers possess no less authority over the sons whom they establish in life, and for whom they are obliged to purchase wives, than over their daughters. As they sell the latter without their consent, and even against their inclination, so also they marry the former without consulting them on the subject; and a son dare not refuse the female selected for him by his father, even though he never saw her before†. Among

* *Cook's Third Voyage, III. p.* 130, 163. It is more than probable that the women of the South Sea islands are less indebted to any regard on the part of their husbands, than to their want of jealousy, for the enjoyment of equal liberty with the female inhabitants of Caucasus. See *Forster's Observ. p.* 365.

† *Du Halde and Loubère*, as above. At Bantam, and in the other parts of the island of Java, fathers betroth their children at as early an age as in China, lest they might otherwise be taken away from them for the harems of the kings, or be sold for slaves, on the death of the fathers, by the monarch, who is the universal heir of all his subjects. *Vogel. p.* 649. *Voyages des Hollandois, I. p.* 349.

the smaller and poorer tribes, and probably among the lower classes of the more extensive nations, in which the fathers provide no establishment for their sons, but the latter themselves pay the purchase money for their brides, or acquire them by service for a certain number of years, young men enjoy the same liberty of chusing any female they please, as among the negroes and Americans. The brides who are thus purchased by the fathers, do not immediately become the property or the slaves of the sons, but these youths continue dependent on the fathers of the females, and are obliged to reside in their habitations, as members of their families, during the term of their service, or till the whole of the purchase-money is paid. Such is the custom in the Philippines*, in Corea and Formosa†, and probably in many other countries and islands of the East Indies. In Sumatra there formerly existed a species of compact, by which the bridegroom was so completely enslaved, that he could never acquire any property, nay even that his children might be sold by the father and family of the

* *Gentil, II. p. 72.*

† *Histoire generale de la Chine, XIII. p. 170, 181.*

wife—an unnatural custom, which the English have endeavoured to suppress in their territories in the island*.

The nations of the south of Asia, and the inhabitants of the East India and South Sea islands are not more consistent in their conduct toward the sex, than the negroes and Americans. Though they despise and oppress their women, yet many nations suffer themselves to be governed by females, or at least pay them the respect that is commonly shewn to queens. In the peninsula of India, and the islands of the South Sea, which originally received their inhabitants from Hindostan, the queens seem to enjoy the highest prerogatives. On the coast of Malabar†, where it is customary for women to have many husbands, and where the daughters and nieces inherit all property, several queens reign, to all appearance, with despotic power, and are in some measure worthy of the sovereign authority. A queen in the vicinity of Bombay, who could bring about five thousand cavalry into the field, exhibited an instance of courage almost without example, even

* *Marsden, p.* 193, 225.

† *Lettres Edifiantes, XII. p.* 297. *Grose, I. p.* 234, 244.

among the men of the Asiatic continent. The prince of the Mahrattas having killed her son in battle, she challenged him to single combat, but the invitation was declined by the Mahratta sovereign, with this reply: that the match between him and the queen would be very unequal, for if she had the good fortune to vanquish him, she would acquire immortal renown, but if he were victorious, he should gain no honour by conquering a woman*. In most of the countries where women possess the supreme authority, it is probably, as in the kingdom of Attinga, a fundamental law of the state, that none but females shall inherit the throne†. These queens are precluded, by another law, from marrying; but they may select as many lovers as they please, so that their seraglio is generally composed of the handsomest youths of their court. The sons of queens sink into the rank of mere gentlemen, and the daughters alone possess an hereditary right of succession to the throne.

Queens, enjoying similar prerogatives, were found among the comely islanders of the South Sea. Oberea, queen of Ota-

* *Grose, I. p.* 234.
† *Ibid. p.* 244.

heite, whose name is so well known even in Europe, had not only a multitude of lovers among her own countrymen, but made no scruple to grant her favours to the English, which gave not the slightest offence to her subjects. Cook, in his last voyage to the South Sea, observed to his great astonishment, in the Friendly Islands, a matron, in whose presence even the king was not permitted to eat, and whose foot he placed upon his royal head in token of the most profound submission*. This female, so highly exalted above the monarch himself, was perhaps his mother, for among most of the nations of the globe, excepting those of Europe, the queen-mother is treated either with equal or still greater respect than the sovereign. At the period of the last visits paid by the English to the natives of Otaheite, queen Oberea seemed to enjoy much less consideration than before, and had perhaps been divested of her royal dignity.

The queens of the other states in the south of Asia, particularly those of Patani, Malacca, and Achin, in Sumatra†, possess rather the shadow of authority than any

* *Cook's Third Voyage, I. p.* 308.
† *Loubère, I. p.* 251. *Dampier, III. p.* 173, &c.

real power, and they are elected and tolerated for no other reason than because the Orankays, or chiefs of the people, are unwilling to exalt any of their equals above their own level. In the countries abovementioned, they always make a point of chusing for their queen some old woman, who is neither susceptible of feeling, or inspiring the tender passion; being apprehensive lest a younger princess might admit some of her lovers to a participation in the throne. These queens, it is true, are always elected out of the same families; but in Dampier's time several of the chieftains in the kingdom of Achin, insisted, that a king possessing all the prerogatives of royalty should be chosen instead of these mock-sovereigns. This demand occasioned a civil war. The queens of Achin and Patani, notwithstanding all the deference that is paid them, have little or no authority, which is in the hands of their vicegerents, the Orankays. In Dampier's time the queen of Achin was more rarely visible than any of the other sovereigns of the western and south eastern regions of Asia. She was shut up all the year through, like a prisoner in her palace, except on one single day, when she rode, dressed in white, upon an elephant to

the river, for the purpose of bathing in its waters.

Among all the inhabitants of the south of Asia, and of the East India and South Sea islands, there exists, or rather existed but one petty tribe, the natives of the Ladrone or Marian Islands, among whom the men were formerly governed by their wives as though they had all been queens, or the sacred priestesses of the great national deities*. We are informed by Gobien, that in these islands, the women have assumed those rights which over all the rest of the world are possessed by the other sex. The wife is absolute mistress of her house, and the husband dares not do any thing, or dispose of any thing without her consent. If she disapproves of his conduct in general, or his treatment of her in particular, she wreaks her vengeance upon him, or abandons him entirely. On a separation of this kind, the wife takes the property which constituted her dowry, and all her children

* I purposely make use of the word *formerly*, because the inhabitants of the Ladrones were in a great measure exterminated, or perished by disease; and the wretched remnants of their race were collected by a philanthropic Spaniard, named Tobias, in the island of Guam.

along with her, and the latter consider the new husband whom she chuses as their father. If a wife be guilty of infidelity, the injured husband may revenge himself in any manner he pleases on the adulterer, and even put him to death; but he is not permitted to inflict any punishment on the woman. If, on the other hand, a wife has reason to suspect her husband of too close an intimacy with other females, she expresses her resentment in an exemplary manner. She either summons all the other women in her village and its vicinity, or appeals to her own relations to avenge her cause. In the first case, the enraged females assemble with their husband's hats on their heads, and spears in their hands, and thus equipped, proceed to the habitation of the guilty or suspected husband. They commence their operations by ravaging his fields, and stripping his fruit trees. This done, they attack his house, plunder it of every thing it contains, and treat the unfortunate owner in the most cruel manner if they find him in it. The relations of the wife, if she should in the first instance demand their aid, pursue a similar line of conduct.

The dread of this ill usuage, or of everlasting slavery, formerly deterred many

young men from matrimony. A number of them contributed toward the purchase and support of females, of whom they were the masters and proprietors, and hence arose the community of wives, which is found to prevail in most of the islands of the South Sea.

Should the reader enquire how this extraordinary influence, enjoyed by the sex, is to be accounted for, I must candidly acknowledge that I am the more incapable of answering this question, since the inhabitants of the Ladrones are as vigorous and robust a race as the natives of any of the East India or South Sea islands.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Condition of Women among the Nations of the East.

UNDER the term of Eastern nations, I mean not to comprise all the inhabitants of Asia, nor do I confine it to the Asiatics alone, but comprehend under the denomination the natives of the western regions of Asia, as far as the Indus, including the tribes of Caucasus; the superior casts of Hindostan; the Tartar hordes in Siberia, Bucharia, and the other countries far as Thibet; and lastly, all the nations of the north-western part of Africa, on this side of the cataracts of the Nile, about Mount Atlas, and the Senegal. All these people bear a striking resemblance to each other, not only in respect to civilization, but also in regard to their talents, disposition, form of government, manners, and treatment of the female sex.

Among the Oriental nations, the men are much more elegantly formed, and are far more robust, more intelligent, and courageous than the southern Asiatics. Their

women are beyond comparison more beautiful than those of the Mongol nations, and some of them may even vie in this respect with any females on the face of the globe. Notwithstanding all their charms, the women of the east have not good sense and virtue enough to inspire the men with the genuine sentiments of love and esteem, and the men are not sufficiently liberal, magnanimous, and sensible to any other than personal attractions, to treat the sex as their equals, or to allow them the rights of human beings; though they scruple not to acknowledge that they could not exist without women, and that they afford them the highest of all earthly gratifications. The condition of the Oriental females is very few degrees superior to that of the women of the south of Asia; but it is infinitely more wretched than the lot of slaves, who are often purchased at a much dearer rate. The civilization and refinement of the men, have every where produced some alleviation of the bondage of the sex; but the deplorable condition of wives and concubines is almost invariably aggravated in proportion to the elevation of rank, till it attains the highest pitch of wretchedness in the harems of

the kings, which are the graves of liberty, humanity, and every pleasure.

Were we to consider the behaviour of the Orientals to the sex, in certain individual and detached cases, we should be inclined to imagine that women were no where so highly honoured, and even adored as in the east. On meeting females, and especially those of high rank, the people turn aside out of their way with demonstrations of as much respect as though they were beings of a superior order*. After the most bloody battles, amid the most unrelenting pillage, and devastation of cities, the women are more cautiously spared than even the priests themselves, and their habitations are the only sanctuaries which are exempted from the destructive swords of the warrior, athirst for blood and plunder†. When any of the Beys in Egypt is defeated, or expelled by his adversaries from his residence, the harem of the vanquished chief remains as free from molestation as if the owner had himself been victorious‡. Fi-

* In Java, the king himself turns out of his way when he chances to meet a woman. See *Beschreibung von Batavia, I. p.* 69.

† *Dow. III. p.* 19.

‡ *Irwin, p.* 346.

nally, the harems are the only asylums in which the slaves of the Orientals are secure from the persecutions and the vengeance of their superiors, and from the swords of their master, which are almost incessantly suspended over their heads. The officers of justice, and executioners, scarcely ever enter the harems of persons whom they are directed to apprehend as criminals, unless they are accused of high treason. In this case, they seize their victims wherever they find them. But before they penetrate into the sanctuary of the female abode, they are careful to give timely notice to its inhabitants to retire, and in particular to withdraw from the culprit*. But, for all these demonstrations of apparent indulgence and respect the women of the east are not indebted to the sacredness of their character, or to the high opinion entertained of their worth; but merely to the unbounded jealousy of their husbands, which spares them for its own sake, even when they trample upon all the laws of justice and humanity.

As sacred as the women of the eastern nations are held by their enemies, and by the civil power, so despicable are they

* *Arvieux, VI. p.* 423

nevertheless considered by the Orientals; so dependent are they upon their fathers, brothers, relatives, and others in whose power they happen to be; so cruel is the oppression and ill-treatment they experience from their husbands and eunuchs; so wholly abandoned are they by the laws and the ministers of justice; so degraded according to the precepts of religion; so destitute of hope and consolation with respect to the future state which awaits them at the close of their mortal existence. A man in the east dares not enquire concerning the health of the wife or daughter of his most intimate friend, because this would instantly excite suspicion of illicit views and connections; neither does etiquette permit him to make mention himself of his own wife or daughter. They are included among the domestic animals, or comprehended in the general denomination of the house or the family. When, however, an Oriental is obliged to mention his wife or his daughter, in conversation with a physician or any other person whom he wishes to treat with deference and respect, he always introduces the subject with some such apology as we make in Europe, when we are obliged to speak of things which are regarded as disgusting

or obscene*. Conformably with this Asiatic prejudice, Tamerlane was highly affronted with the vanquished Turkish emperor, Bajazet, for mentioning, in his presence, such impure creatures as women are considered by the Orientals. Though Mahomet prized the delights which women afford, beyond every other gratification, and promised all the faithful the embraces of celestial beauties, as the highest reward of their fidelity and good works; yet he speaks of them in his Koran as if they were beings of an inferior order to men; and many Mahometans not only doubt, but also deny that women have souls, and that they are destined to participate in the joys of Paradise†. Even the tender-hearted Musulmans, who are disposed to allow a future state and future felicity for the poor women, maintain, however, that they will not be admitted into the same Paradise with the men, but that there is a blissful abode set apart for them‡; a notion which has never obtained partizans in our division of the globe, and which I hope either sex will be equally ready to reject. Such a mean estimation of wo-

* *Arvieux, I. p.* 229, 230.
† *Volney, II. p.* 442. *Chardin, IV. p.* 26.
‡ *Chardin,* as above.

men as Mahomet's Koran announces, did not originate with the Arabs and their legislator; but Mahomet derived it from the universal sentiment of the Orientals, which from time immemorial has prevailed from the north-western extremity of Africa to the shores of the Ganges and the mountains of Thibet, and still predominates in those regions, not only among the Mahometans, but also among their heathen and Christian inhabitants. Though Mahomet has not forbidden it, yet the Orientals are as tenacious as their remotest ancestors, of permitting their most highly favoured women to eat, or merely to be seated in their presence, because they regard either as an indignity or degradation to man, the lord of woman. When the Orientals enter their harem, they never fondle or caress their favourite wives and concubines, but these respectfully kiss the hands of their masters, and it is even a kind of reproach among the Turks, and other nations of the East, to be thought fond of women, or to shew them much tenderness or respect*. The Persians, Hindoos, or other Oriental people, regard it as an irrefragable principle, and have

* *Russel, p.* 115.

adopted it as a proverb*, that women were made solely for the enjoyment of men, and for the production of children. The Persians, and other nations of the East, therefore estimate the value of women, not by their talents, abilities, knowledge, and industry, but by the degree of sensual gratification which they afford; on which account, they prize a certain fullness and rotundity in females, more highly than the most perfect beauty, the greatest talents, the most valuable attainments, and the most exalted virtues†. Not only do the Orientals neither expect nor reverence any virtue in women, but they ascribe to them, without exception, every vice of which the sex is capable, and by which it is most debased. The appetite of a woman, say the laws of the Hindoos‡, can no more be satiated than a devouring fire by the combustibles thrown into it, or the ocean by the rivers which disgorge themselves into its bosom, or the empire of death by the men and animals which it swallows up. Woman, continues the genius of Hindostanic legislation, has six inherent failings: in the first place, an inordinate love of

* *Chardin, III. p.* 391. *Gentoo Laws, p.* 250.
† *Ibid.* as above.
‡ *Gentoo Laws, p.* 250.

finery, dress, and delicacies; in the second, an immoderate propensity to sensual pleasures; thirdly, a violent irascibility; fourthly, a profound and dissembled malice; fifthly, an innate jealousy, which converts the good qualities of others into bad; sixthly, a natural inclination to evil—a sentiment that comprehends much more than all the preceding.

With these principles, the conduct of the natives of the East perfectly coincides, as the reader will presently be convinced. If, therefore, so many nations as are included in the denomination of Orientals have for ages thought and acted in a uniform, undeviating manner, this harmony of sentiment and conduct cannot be ascribed to the precepts of individual legislators and founders of religions; but we are obliged to presume that it is the effect of immutable causes, and that the most unlimited authority on the one hand, and the most abject slavery on the other, proceed from the natural disposition, qualities, and relations of the sexes;—a conjecture which, on a closer investigation, we find confirmed by the most authentic data.

The early and short-lived youth of the females of the East renders polygamy necessary, at least for many men; and

among people so addicted to jealousy as the Orientals, the inevitable consequence of this polygamy is the confinement of the women. In the rigid seclusion to which marriageable females* and wives are doomed, it is impossible for them to acquire that useful knowledge which can only be derived from the instruction and company of men. Even the duties of domestic economy are performed in the East by slaves in all the houses of the great and opulent; and females, married or unmarried, are as little disposed to undertake these servile offices, as are husbands and fathers to commit them to their superintendence†. At the tender age in which girls become wives, with their minds wholly uncultivated, destitute of all agreeable or useful knowledge, incapable of any domestic occupation, and wholly unacquainted with the world and the affairs of life, it is impossible for them to excite in their husbands any thing but appetite, to inspire them with friendship, love, or esteem, to amuse them in the hours of leisure, to comfort and cheer them in the

* In the countries of the East, girls are marriageable at the age of eight, nine, or ten years.

† *Chardin*, as above.

days of affliction, or to give them advice in matters of importance. The females of the East are in general just what they are considered by their most passionate admirers, children destitute of souls, or creatures with but half a soul, destined for mere animal enjoyment, and the propagation of the species.

Incomprehensible as the want of love in the Orientals under these circumstances may appear, the profound contempt which these very people entertain for a sex so essential to their happiness, may nevertheless be very easily accounted for. In beings so childish, rude, ignorant, and uncultivated as the females of the East, in whom, no less than in the men, the climate has implanted an insatiable appetite; the propensity to every kind of sensual gratification, and all the passions of little, unpolished, and debased minds, must be infinitely stronger than in the women of our division of the globe: because the innate vices are neither eradicated by the cultivation of the heart and understanding, nor suppressed by useful industry; but on the contrary, are powerfully inflamed and excited by confinement, and the illusions of those very passions. Accordingly, all the laws and religions, all the moralists

and travellers in the East, describe voluptuousness, indolence, intemperance, epicurism, avarice, love of finery in dress, luxury, envy, jealousy, and the most unnatural propensities as the ordinary vices of the women of the East, which are not disguised or compensated by one single female virtue. Can we still be surprised that the Orientals not only do not love their women, but hold them in supreme contempt, and are even apprehensive of disgracing themselves by giving occasion to others to suspect them of tenderness towards their wives? The mean opinion which the Orientals entertain of the sex, is too general and uneradicable to be unmerited; at the same time it is to be deplored, that with such constitutions as the women receive from the nature of their climate, amid such a total want of education and instruction, amid that seclusion and the oppression under which they groan, it is impossible for them to be less despicable than they are.

As the females of the East continue children in understanding, so according to the laws of all the Oriental nations they are during their whole lives considered as children, who have no will of their own, or who would infallibly involve themselves and

others in ruin, if they were left to their own discretion*. Women and girls are constantly dependent either on fathers, brothers, or other male relations, continually remain members of families, and cannot legally execute any civil act. In the regions of the East, the power of the father over his children is so great, that the sons are not consulted with respect to marriage any more than the daughters†. It is the mothers in general who conclude these matches. When a mother has a son of a proper age, she searches all the harems of her acquaintance, and all the baths to which she has access, till she finds a young female whom she thinks an eligible companion for her son. As soon as she has discovered such a one, and her husband approves her choice, either the mother or the father of the youth, or some person in their name, opens the business to the parents of the female. If the match appears acceptable to the latter, they negociate respecting the price to be paid for the bride, the dowry, settlement, and jointure in case of widowhood, till at length the terms are agreed to by both parties. This

* *Chardin, and Gentoo Laws*, as above.

† *Chardin, I. p.* 231, &c. *Russel, p.* 111, &c. *Ricaut, II. c.* 21. *Niebuhr's Arabia, p.* 75.

done, they apply to a cadi, or an ecclesiastic, by whom, or in whose presence the marriage contract is signed by the agents of the bride and bridegroom. In Turkey, the bridegroom, but not the bride, and in Persia, on the contrary, the bride, but not her father, is present on this occasion. The ecclesiastic and the minister of justice, together with the bridegroom, his father, and the attorney, then repair to the house of the bride's father, who, when the contract is transcribed and ready for execution, withdraws, that the bridegroom may be left perfectly at liberty. When the representative of the bride has promised her to the bridegroom as his wife, the ecclesiastic, or the cadi, goes to the half-opened door of the adjoining apartment, where the bride, veiled so as to be quite invisible, is surrounded by her female relatives and friends, and asks her whether she is satisfied with the match, and with the terms concluded by her attorney. To this question, she invariably replies in the affirmative; but it should be observed, that this interrogation of the bride, as well as the withdrawing of her father, are nothing but empty ceremonies. The bride never sees the bridegroom before the nuptials, and the bridegroom very seldom

obtains a sight of the bride, unless he contrives to corrupt the female overseer of the baths which she frequents*. If he does not avail himself of this method, the bridegroom never sees his bride till after the consummation of their nuptials; for on the wedding day she is led veiled to his house, undressed at night in the bridal chamber, and resigned in the dark apartment to the embraces of the bridegroom, who thus enjoys his young wife before he has been indulged with a sight of her. Where young people know neither each other's person, condition, nor circumstances, except by the reports of their relations, they cannot conceive the idea of refusing a match proposed to them by their parents, because they have no reason to hope in future to become more intimately acquainted with him or her, with whom they are to pass the remainder of their lives; but on the contrary to fear that the next offer which is made them may be worse instead of better.

When a bride has been delivered to her bridegroom and found to be a virgin, she is transferred from the paternal to the con-

* *Dow, III. p.* 33. *Anquetil Voy. p.* 356. *Chardin and Russel,* as above.

jugal authority, which is never inferior to that of the father, but in general much more oppressive. Among all the eastern nations there are, however, cases in which legitimate wives may claim the protection of the laws, and still more frequently it depends on the will and the influence of fathers, to alleviate the condition of their married daughters.

When rich voluptuaries purchase the daughters of indigent parents, these wretched females cannot prevent their lord from stocking his harem with as many wives as the laws permit, and whatever number of concubines he pleases ; nor can they complain if he sells them in case of barrenness, or puts them away, when he is grown weary of them. When, on the contrary, a wife has brought her husband a considerable dowry, and their union has been confirmed by the legal authorities, she runs much less risk of being divorced, because a man is obliged to settle a substantial jointure on a wife whom he repudiates. Opulent parents often give their daughters to one of their own freedmen, not only without accepting any price for them, but with a large dowry or valuable presents, at the same time insisting upon this condition, that their sons-in-law shall take no other

wives, that they shall never put away their daughters, or in case of divorce, that they shall make them a handsome settlement—a stipulation which renders the husband extremely unwilling to part from his wife. Women of this description are in some measure mistresses of their husbands, for among the Turks and Arabs, the dowry remains in their own possession*. In Persia†, brides receive a dowry, which, in case of divorce or separation, devolves to the husband, but he is obliged to allow his wife the jointure he has promised her. Among the Moors of Africa, and most of the other Orientals, the wife can claim no part of the husband's property on his decease, but retains the dower she brought him‡. Among the Arabs, the widow and the infant children reserve the tent, and share the remainder in equal portions with the grown sons and daughters§. In Hindostan, it is the duty of the eldest son, or the male representative of the deceased, to maintain the widow, and to provide for the female children‖. In most of the

* *Niebuhr*, as above.
† *Chardin, III. p.* 409.
‡ *Shaw, p.* 239.
§ *Arvieux, III. p.* 338.
‖ *Sonnerat, I. p.* 60.

regions of the East, the sons, especially the first-born, enjoy superior rights and privileges to the daughters. In Persia, the eldest son is entitled to two-thirds of the property, the remainder is divided among the other children, but in such proportions, that the daughters receive only half as much as the sons*.

Though the Orientals possess the same right as the ancient Jews of repudiating their wives without assigning any reason; yet such divorces are very rare among people of condition, because they are not restrained only by the loss which they sustain in such cases, but also by the fear of shame†. Men of rank, says Chardin, would rather die themselves than put away their wives, or dispatch the latter, sooner than agree to a divorce. While, therefore, the men very seldom avail themselves of their privilege of divorcing their wives, the women dare not use the right of separating from their husbands, which they are allowed by the laws. It is a circumstance equally rare for women to claim another right which the laws likewise give them, I mean that of being favoured every month with a

* *Chardin*, as above.
† *Ricaut*, as above.

certain number of embraces by their husbands*. When complaints of this kind are made, the men are never at a loss for excuses to deceive their neglected wives, even before the tribunal of justice. The compulsory law, which obliges the Mahometans to perform the conjugal duty, like a service they are bound to render, or a tribute they are necessitated to pay, existed also among the Jews, and was incontestibly adapted to the situation and sentiments of the Orientals: but it is scarcely necessary to observe, that this law presupposes ideas respecting the design of matrimony and the relations between husband and wife, which have never obtained among the nations of our division of the globe.

Another law, given by Mahoment, with respect to divorces, which is still observed by all Mahometan nations, and affords one of the many demonstrations of the great inferiority of the Arab to the Jewish legislator, is still more revolting than the last-mentioned injunction. Moses rendered the divorce and the reunion of married people as easy as Mahomet afterwards did; but, at the same time, he decreed, that a

* *Michaelis Mos. Recht, II. p.* 163, 185, *and* 304.

man should be at liberty to take back his repudiated wife only when she had not been married to another husband*. Mahomet on the other hand, not only permitted a husband to divorce his wife thrice, with impunity, but to take her again a third time, if he first suffered another man to lie with her. By this odious law, Mahomet designed to prevent too frequent divorces, but he failed in this object; and at the same time bequeathed a remarkable monument of the levity of the Orientals in the most important concerns, of the inconstancy of their passions, and of a want of decency, which it seems impossible to reconcile with their excessive jealousy.

Unnatural, and almost incredible as it may appear, that a husband should thrice repudiate his wife, and thrice receive her again; that she should always be willing to return; that, moreover, on this third reunion, the woman should not only permit herself to be contaminated by another, but that the husband also should consent to this proceeding; certain it is, that instances of this kind are still to be found among all the Mahometan nations. They

* *Michaelis Mos. Recht, II. p.* 310, &c.

are, it is true, almost exclusively confined to the lowest classes; they are likewise considered as disgraceful, and the intermediate persons who are employed as the bedfellows of the women, are regarded as the vilest of mankind* ; but yet this abhorrence has not had the effect of entirely preventing these childish separations, and dishonourable reunions. In the Maldives, and probably in the other Mahometan countries, a method has long been discovered by which the legal stipulation of the third reunion is literally fulfilled, but without hurting the jealousy of the husband. They hire some poor wretch to lie with the woman, but previously oblige him to swear he will not touch her, and thus evade the intention of the legislator†. As the inhabitants of the Maldives are much more inconstant than the other Orientals, divorces and reunions are far more frequent, even in the higher classes, among them than in other countries ; even ladies of the highest rank, when they have resolved to return for the third time to their husbands, are obliged to submit to pass a

* *Ricaut, Liv. II. ch.* 21, *p.* 467, 468. *Chardin, I. p.* 235. *Pyrard, I. p.* 115.

† *Pyrard,* as above.

night by the side of a hired stranger, who is universally considered as a vile and degraded character. In the Maldives, the inconstant couple is allowed to separate a fourth time, and to be again united by the same disgraceful medium; but if they again part, a fifth reunion is absolutely prohibited*. Among the Turks, on the other hand, when a man has taken back his wife for the third time, their union is indissoluble†.

Incompatible as the Mosaic laws may be with our manners, notions, and institutions, still they are advantageously distinguished in most respects from the laws of Mahomet, and the sentiments peculiar to the Oriental nations. Moses, indeed, like Mahomet, permitted every Israelite to take four lawful wives, and an indefinite number of concubines‡; but he studied the welfare of slaves and concubines much more than Mahomet, or than the previous customs of his own nation had done. Slaves of either sex, of Jewish origin, were free, without ransom, in the seventh year of their servitude. If a master ill-treated

* *Pyrard, I. p.* 115.
† *Arvieux, VI. p.* 448.
‡ *Michaelis Mos. Recht, II. p.* 186.

a concubine, she might purchase her liberty for a moderate sum, or might find a bridegroom to redeem her. An Israelite was not permitted to sell slaves of his own nation, who were yet virgins, to foreigners. Even those concubines who were either taken in war, or purchased of heathen slave-merchants, he was obliged to set at liberty, without ransom, when he began to be weary of them*. Among the other eastern nations, the servitude of purchased slaves continues for life. When neglected by their master, they cannot insist on his selling them for an inconsiderable sum. None can dictate to what new master, and to what nation he shall or shall not dispose of her; neither can any of them obtain her liberty when her lord is weary of her. On the contrary, a master may give away or sell even those which have borne him children to whomsoever he pleases. Slaves of this description, however, often regain their freedom after the death of their lords; at least in Morocco, female negroes who have had children by their masters, cannot be sold during the lifetime of the latter, and are set at liberty after their decease†. If such a law were

* *Michaelis Mos. Recht, II. p.* 116, 122.

† *Höst, p.* 104.

introduced into all the harems of the monarchs and great men of the East, neither so many unborn infants would be destroyed, nor so many deeds of darkness perpetrated, as even still disgrace the seraglios of the Orientals.

As invariably as polygamy and concubinage have been perpetuated in the regions of the East, so invariably have the notions of the Israelites, and other ancient Oriental nations, with respect to fecundity and barrenness, been retained to the present day. By the modern eastern females, as by the Israelites of old, fecundity is considered as the greatest blessing of Heaven, and barrenness as the greatest misfortune that can befal a woman. When, therefore, Turkish ladies of distinction, and other women of the East, find themselves doomed to sterility, they purchase for their husbands, as in ancient times, concubines or slaves, whose children are regarded as their own*. These notions concerning fruitfulness and sterility, are too general and invariable to have been diffused by legislators and the founders of religions alone.

* *Maillet, II. p.* 87. *Michaelis Mos. Recht, II. p.* 124, 129.

A striking difference prevails with respect to the legitimate wives of the eastern monarchs of ancient and modern times. The ancient sovereigns of Numidia, Egypt, Judea, Assyria, Persia, and Parthia, had not only several queens, or lawful wives, but often kept a much greater number than Moses permitted in the remote ages, and Mahomet in more modern times*. The queens of Persia were crowned with a royal diadem, invested with a robe of purple, the insignia of royal rank, and appeared seated at the right hand of the monarch, in the presence of all the people†. The king settled on these legitimate consorts, the revenues of whole cities to defray the expences of their dress and household, and the sons of these wives only could, by right, succeed to the throne‡. At the present day, the emperors of Morocco have four legitimate wives, the chief of whom bears the title of Scherifa§. The same number is kept by the kings of Java, and other sovereigns in the south and south-east of Asia, who profess the Mahometan religion‖. The present rulers

* *Michaelis Mos. Recht, I. p.* 277.
† *Briss. de regno Persarum, Lib. I.* §. 107, &c.
‡ *Ibid.* §. 105.
§ *Höst, p.* 175.
‖ *Valentyn, V.* 59.

of the Turks and Persians, form a contrast with these ancient and modern examples of eastern kings. It is a fundamental law of the Turkish empire*, that the Sultan shall not take any legitimate wife, and the Janissaries assigned as a reason for their discontent with the emperor Osman, whom they put to death, that he had taken a wife contrary to the laws of the Musulmans. The cause of the law prohibiting the Sultan to marry, is said by the Turks to be this, that Bajazet was more deeply affected by the indignities to which he saw his beloved wife Despine subjected by his enemy, than by all those that he himself endured in his captivity. Ever since that period, say the Turks, a law has been in force forbidding the Sultan to marry, to prevent the recurrence of a similar disaster. Ricaut himself acknowledges that this method of accounting for the Turkish custom is by no means satisfactory. The observations subjoined, by the same writer, afford a much more plausible reason. In the first place, the Sultan is allowed concubines without number, but not a wife, in order to obviate the prodigious expence which the establish-

* *Ricaut, p.* 464, 466.

ments of four legitimate Sultanas would require. One wife of the Turkish emperor could not be supported with less than the Valide, or mother of the Sultan, whose revenues amount to at least one hundred thousand pounds. A still stronger reason why this law has been imposed upon the Turkish emperors, or rather why they have imposed it on themselves is, that they may not form a permanent connexion with any family in the realm, which might afford occasion for civil dissensions, jealousy, and envy. Similar reasons have probably induced the Persian sovereigns to content themselves with concubines, and not to exalt any of them to the rank of queen*. Hence no distinction between legitimate or illegitimate sons and daughters is made, either in the harem of the king of Persia, or in the seraglio of Constantinople. All the children are equally legitimate, and the first-born son of the king succeeds to the throne, even though his mother were a negress†. Among the Turks, the children of concubines are entitled to equal rights with those of lawful wives, if the father has given them their

* *Chardin, III. p.* 391.
† *Ibid. III. p.* 408, 409.

liberty either during his life-time, or by his last will. When this is not done, the children of concubines continue in servitude, and become the slaves of the eldest son, or of the legitimate wife*.

According to European notions, there can scarcely exist a more cruel and disgraceful captivity than that of the wives and concubines of the kings and grandees of the East, on their entrance into the harems of their husbands and masters. A more dreary abode can indeed scarcely be conceived than that, in which a human being is continually surrounded by incessant dangers and malicious enemies; in which the most violent passions and appetites are excited to phrenzy, without ever being gratified; in which the blackest ideas and resolutions are awakened, projected, and cherished in the soul. The inhabitants of the harems of the monarchs and grandees have not only to endure the coldness, the neglect, the cruelty, or the disgusting, and often unnatural caresses of husbands and masters, whom they detest; but they are exposed to the most humiliating indignities from eunuchs, to the arrogance of the mothers of their lords, and to the artifices

* *Ricaut, p.* 460.

of their rivals. By the inactivity and indolent repose in which they live, and by the rich food and delicacies with which they are provided, their appetites are inflamed to the highest pitch of fury; and as in very few these appetites are gratified in a natural way, hence originate odious propensities and horrible vices, which, in Europe are known only to the most depraved wretches in the most corrupt capitals. These unsatisfied, or unnatural propensities are, however, the least painful of those internal tormentors by which these wretched females are incessantly persecuted. Envy and jealousy of more fortunate rivals, with projects of revenge to destroy these rivals and their hopes, are almost always preying upon the already wounded and tortured hearts of the females of the East.

All the travellers in the Oriental regions are, therefore, unanimous in asserting*, what we should easily believe without their assurance, that were it not for the arbitrary authority of the husband and his deputies, it would be impossible to curb the appetites, passions, and criminal designs of so many women as the harems

* See *Dow, Vol. III. Dissert. p.* 14.

of the great contain. The hands of the husband, and of his eunuchs, are like the hands of the eastern despots, and their viziers, pachas, and agas, incessantly armed with the sabre and the scourge, in order to chastise and exterminate every disobedient or guilty slave from the face of the earth. Those instruments of terror, the brandished sword and the uplifted scourge; are so much the more necessary, the more numerous are the troops, nay, we might even say armies of females confined in the harems of the kings. Three or four hundred wives and concubines was the smallest number kept by the ancient Persian monarchs, and by the sovereign of the same country in Chardin's time*. Large as this quantity of women may be considered, it dwindles almost to nothing in comparison of the prodigious numbers collected by other Asiatic and African monarchs. We should scarcely be able to give credit to the report that Bensar, emperor of Morocco, had eight thousand wives and concubines†, did we not know that there are negro-kings who have seraglios of five thousand, and that the harem and

* *Briss*, as above.
† *Höst*, *p.* 49.

attendants of the emperor and kings of Java comprize no less than ten thousand females*. When we are told that all these wretches are doomed to a life of misery for the sake of one single, worthless despot, what bosom is not filled with indignation at the unrelenting obduracy of the monsters that can walk without emotion among these hosts of martyrs; and who is not struck with horror at the privation of innocent pleasures, the suppression of natural propensities, and the explosions of unnatural appetites, passions, and vices, which cannot fail to be occasioned by the forcible seclusion of such vast numbers of females, reduced to the brink of despair!

As little as the inhabitants of the most dreary dungeons and prisons can be kept in order by kind treatment, so little have the Orientals found themselves able to govern their harems with love. All the legislators of the East have, therefore, declared with Moses, that man is the lord of woman, an expression which never has been, and never can be understood in Europe in that sense, in which it is taken to the present day in the Oriental regions.

* *Smith, p. 200, 201; Valentyn, V. p. 59.*

Unless the royal descent of females, or the voluntary renunciation of rights in the marriage-contract make an exception, the husband in the East is so absolutely the lord over his wife, that he can scourge her like a slave, shut her up like a criminal in a dungeon, or put her to death, without fear of being cited before any tribunal*. The friends and relatives of a woman who is ill-treated by her husband may remonstrate with him, but cannot prefer any legal complaint concerning his conduct†. Every wife, on the contrary, is commanded by the sacred books, and the priests of the Hindoos‡, to think above all things on her husband, and to let her whole attention be incessantly engaged with him. If the wife, say they, be so occupied with the idea of her husband that her thoughts are wholly diverted from the Deity, this cannot be imputed to her as a sin, because the husband thinks in her stead of the gods, and her duties to them. Nay, even if the husband commands his wife to commit a crime, she is bound to obey him, since obedience is a good work, and the misdeed is not imputed to the wife,

* *Roger, I. ch.* 14. *Dow,* as above.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Ibid. I. ch.* 19.

but to the husband, who is in reality the author of it.

As various writers, and among the rest a fair and accomplished English lady, Mary Wortley Montagu, have endeavoured to persuade the Europeans that women no where enjoy liberty except in Turkey and the East, because they are there allowed to pay visits veiled, and to receive visitors in disguise, whenever they please; I shall subjoin a brief description of the condition of women and virgins in the harems of the Persian and Turkish monarchs and grandees. The testimony of history alone must be sufficient to convince every reader that the state of women in the East, instead of being an object of envy, is in the highest degree deplorable. For the harems of the kings of Persia, (I speak as though things were still the same now as in Chardin's time), the most beautiful virgins are not only purchased in Georgia and Circassia, but sought up in the whole kingdom of Persia*. When it is known that a female of extraordinary beauty is living in this place, or in that family, the royal attendants demand her without ceremony for the harem of the sovereign; the

* *Chardin, III. p.* 385, &c.

parents cheerfully surrender their children, or rather seek by every possible method to introduce them into his seraglio, because they then receive a pension, which is augmented with the good fortune of their daughters, and have moreover reason to expect farther proofs of the bounty of the king. From the moment the new comers enter the harem, they never behold the face of a man, except that of their master; for all the mechanics, all the attendants, the very guards, nay even the persons who there perform the duties of religion, are females. White eunuchs are not permitted to approach the harem, lest their appearance should remind the secluded females that there exist other men like their monarch. Only the most hideous and aged negroes from Africa, or the coast of Malabar, who have been totally deprived of every sign and vestige of manhood, are allowed to enter the harem; one of these is the governor of the women, and before him the favourites of the sovereign themselves tremble, for he has the power to scourge and put to death whomsoever he pleases. Each inhabitant of the harem has a separate apartment, or two at most live together in the same chamber, one young, and the other old. None of

them dares visit her next neighbour, or most intimate friend, without previously obtaining permission. Each daily receives her portion of food, and, at stated periods, the clothes and pension that are allowed her. She is attended by her own particular slaves of both sexes, the males being emasculated, and either under ten, or above fifty years of age. Her sole occupations are singing and dancing before the king, and embroidery: but most of them pass their lives in total indolence, reclining upon soft couches, smoaking tobacco from morning till night, and causing themselves to be rubbed by their slaves, which is one of the principle gratifications of the Asiatics. Among all the beauties who gain the favour of the sovereign, she alone who is so fortunate as to bring him the first son, has reason to exult in her lot, because she may indulge the hope of one day attaining the rank and consequence of queen-mother; who, in conjunction with the chief of the eunuchs possesses the greatest influence not only in, but also out of the harem. She dispenses the dignities to which the inhabitants of the seraglio may aspire, chuses those who are to be married, and not only has the lives of the king's concu-

bines at her disposal, but is always closely connected with his ministers, who in general obey her will as implicitly as they follow the commands of the monarch. All the other concubines who have children after the birth of the first-born son, are shut up in detached parts of the harem, where they are guarded much more strictly than the rest, and live in continual danger of being put to death by the reigning monarch himself, or by his successor. None of the women who have children living, or have borne children, or only been pregnant, may ever indulge the hope of quitting the royal harem, and being married to the principal officers of state, which is the most ardent wish of them all. After the death of the king, whose concubines they were, these wretched creatures are shut up in a distant quarter, where they are cut off for ever, not only from the world, but from the rest of the harem.

In order to avoid these dangers, and this hopeless captivity, all the fair inhabitants of the harem shun as much as possible the embraces of the sovereign, or at least seek to prevent pregnancy and child-birth by every species of wicked art; and this is the cause of the frequent abortions in the harems of the kings. The most beautiful females employ every kind of pretext, but

most frequently that of their monthly indisposition, in order to disappoint the appetite of the king; but these artifices, if discovered, draw down upon them the most cruel punishments. Abbas the Second, of Persia, caused a female, who had thus eluded his embraces to be bound fast in a chimney, and to be slowly consumed by a fire kindled underneath her. Though the women of the harem consider their abode as a prison, and the love of the king as their greatest misfortune, they nevertheless envy and persecute each other in the bitterest manner, whether they have or have not any hope of leaving the harem. The causes of this hostile disposition are various; greater or more frequent favours, and particularly richer presents received by others from the king; the ambitious desire of higher honours; the general wish to quit the seraglio, and be married before the rest; and consuming jealousy, in the strictest signification of the word; for the females of the East court the favours of beautiful women more than those of men, and love persons of their own sex more passionately than they love their husbands and masters. These unnatural propensities excite in them a hatred against men, as unnatural appetites in men produce an indifference toward women. All the in-

habitants of the harem are therefore at continual warfare, and each seeks every opportunity of destroying her adversaries by poison, or by calumnies scarcely less fatal. The frequent accusations and murders are the subject of incessant investigation, and are followed by death, whipping, and other disgraceful punishments. Some are confined in the remotest parts of the harem, and doomed to the lowest drudgery; others are beaten with rods, or sticks, and others are strangled, burned, or buried alive. Yet with all these cruel punishments the monarch is not able to prevent sometimes a favourite female, and still more frequently his children, from being destroyed by poison, or in other ways. The queen-mother from time to time causes some of her son's children to be dispatched whenever they begin to be troublesome from their numbers. The monarchs are apprized of these proceedings, without putting a stop to them, and were they even disposed to check these atrocities, how could they discover all the ways of wickedness in the mazy labyrinths of their immense harem? It is, however, but very rarely that the harems of the Orientals contain many children; for, if the men were not to exhaust themselves so early as they actually do, if they did not so often

throw themselves into the arms of common women, or give way to unnatural propensities, in which, as we are informed, the possessors of the greatest number of the most beautiful women universally indulge; yet, the oppression and enmity of these secluded females would furnish a satisfactory answer to the question, why the Orientals upon an average rear fewer children* than the Europeans, who content themselves with one wife. Women destroy the fruit of their womb before it is known that they have conceived. If, however, they produce a family, secret poison, or the command of an iron-hearted grandmother very often snatch from them the children they have unfortunately brought into the world.

The seraglio of Constantinople is upon the same system as that of Ispahan†. Ricaut was informed, that when the emperor entered his harem all its fair inhabitants were placed in a row, that he might select one to be his companion the succeeding night, to whom he signified his choice by throwing his handkerchief. More recent accounts, however, contradict

* *Chardin, III. p.* 391. *Ricaut*, as above.
† *Ricaut*, as above, and *II. p.* 21.

this ancient and generally received report. The Sultan is more confined by the laws of custom, which prevail in his seraglio, than any of his subjects. He is not at liberty to change his bed-fellow except on high festivals*. Chardin likewise assures us, that the kings of Persia are generally tied for a considerable time to one female. Thus Nature frequently drives back, even against their will, into her circle, or into her paths, those rebellious children, whose sole study it is to violate her laws.

In the harems of the great there are not, it is true, so many eunuchs, or so many wives and concubines as in those of the monarch, but in this consists the only difference. The eunuchs of the great perform the same office, and possess the same authority, and their women are subject to the same passions, vices, and fortunes as in the harems of kings. The women of the great, like those of the king, are not permitted to quit their habitation, nor are they allowed to receive visits from their female relatives and friends, except at particular times, on occasion of a wedding, lying-in, or great festivals. These visits commonly last a week, or longer.

* *Businello, p.* 69. *Habesci, p.* 168.

The visitors do not come privately, unattended, or with a small retinue, but generally bring with them all their valuables, their apparel, and female slaves, besides which they are accompanied by a number of eunuchs, to whose care they are committed by their husbands*. It must be obvious to every one, that it is scarcely possible for the inhabitants of great harems to give or receive visits of which their husbands or masters have any reason to be jealous.†

It may be justly asserted of all the Oriental nations, that they are jealous in a much higher degree than the Europeans, and that they shut up their women, and watch them with greater precaution than the latter. Among these nations there is, nevertheless, a great difference in the degree of jealousy and rigour with which they confine their females. The modern Persians, like their forefathers in the remotest antiquity, are the most jealous of all; and those readers who are not yet acquainted with Chardin's work, would consider the instances of Persian jealousy, recorded by that writer, as fables, or as the

* *Chardin, III. p.* 392.

† *Briss. II.* §. 261. *Plutarch, I. p.* 489, *V. p.* 497. *Edit. Reiskii.* On the jealousy of the Parthians, see *Justin, p.* 41, *ch.* 3.

follies of the inhabitants of another world. The Persians, says he,* regard it as a tenet of their religion, and a precept of their prophet, that a man ought to guard his faith and his wives with equal vigilance, and that it is therefore criminal in him merely to look at the habitations of his neighbour's wives. If any one unconsciously surveys or approaches the houses or apartments in which women reside, the owners or watchmen immediately call to him to be gone; this injunction is instantly complied with, otherwise the offender would receive a severe chastisement for his temerity, without being able to obtain the least satisfaction. On meeting women in a journey in the public roads, passengers are obliged to turn their backs on them, even though they be ever so securely inclosed in litters or other vehicles. The jealousy of the Persians is carried to such a pitch that, on the interment of women, they erect tents over their graves, that no person may see their inanimate remains. They instil into the minds of their females, from their earliest infancy, this maxim, that honour and virtue consist not only in avoiding the society of

* *Chardin, III. p.* 384, &c.

strangers of the other sex, but also in not suffering themselves to be seen by men. They even imagine that the faithful in Paradise will have eyes in the crown of the head, to prevent their seeing the houris, or celestial females who belong to others. All the Mahometans, and the Persians in particular, rigidly adhere to a rule which prevailed among the Israelites in the remotest ages : that a female should not see any persons of the other sex, except such as she is legally prevented from marrying. A married woman, who is not of the lowest class, is not permitted during her whole life to see her nephews, or her husband's brothers, any more than strangers ; her acquaintance with the other sex being confined to her husband and her sons. Thus, among the higher classes, brothers are denied access to their married sisters ; the latter are very rarely permitted to pay visits, and that only in the night. On these occasions, a number of horsemen always ride before and behind the vehicle, crying with all their might *kuruck, kuruck*, which is equivalent to a warning to abstain from something prohibited. On hearing this terrific cry, every one runs away with as much precipitation as though it were a wild beast

which he was anxious to avoid. If any person happens not to hear, or neglects to attend to the warning voice of the first troop of horsemen, the eunuchs who ride between them and the litters containing the women, and are provided with long staves, fall upon him and beat him most unmercifully*.

But nothing excites greater terror in Persia than this exclamation before the women of the king, for in this case, every unfortunate wretch found within the forbidden circuit pays the forfeit of his life. This circuit extends as far as the camels which carry the women can be discerned. When the royal harem passes through a town, all the male inhabitants who reside in the streets through which the cavalcade passes, are obliged to quit their houses, and all the avenues leading to them are closed up with curtains. When Chardin was in Persia, the harem paid frequent visits to the country during the two first years of the reign of the young monarch, and the train on these occasions invariably traversed the suburbs of Ispahan. The king's concubines sometimes took it into their heads to leave the seraglio in

* *Chardin, III. p.* 392, &c.

the night, and then all those who resided in the vicinity of their route were obliged to leave their beds, and fly with the utmost precipitation, whether sick or in health, old or young, let the weather and the roads be ever so bad. When the harem is travelling through the country, the attendants are employed for half a day before in driving all the men out of the villages on the way, and even out of such as are three or four miles distant from the road along which the women are to pass. A whole regiment of horse-guards is employed to perform this duty. The first notice of flight is not considered sufficient for the perfect security of the king's women; for the same regiment, which cleared the way half a day before the departure of the harem, again scours the road two hours before it sets off, and by incessant discharges of musketry announces, that the cavalcade may soon be expected. Even this second warning is not enough; an hour before the harem breaks up, the white eunuchs sally forth to see whether the road is clear and safe. When they meet with any person, they dispatch him without mercy, let him be ever so old, infirm, and imbecile, both in body and mind. Chardin records several examples

of old men, who on account of their great age conceived themselves entitled to the rights of eunuchs, and approached the person of the monarch to deliver petitions, or travellers who were ignorant of the passing of the harem, or servants of the king who had fallen asleep from fatigue being either punished by the hand of the despot himself, or by his attendants, as traitors to the sovereign. In Chardin's time, women were even forbidden to appear in the way of the king, or of the royal harem, because the Armenian females had formerly approached the monarch under various pretexts, that they might be seen by him, and because Abbas the Second had caused a beatiful Armenian woman to be taken from her husband. Chardin observes, that this was the only instance that could be recollected in Persia, of a king having violated the conjugal rights, which are held so sacred by the Mahometans, and appropriated to himself the wife of another*. The Persians, it is true, in general admit, that the king has power to go into the harems of all his subjects, because whatever he touches still continues pure and immaculate, but the

* *Chardin, III. p.* 349

captain of the guard of the harem belonging to the commander in chief of the armies of Abbas the Great, once had the courage to tell the king, who one day after dinner signified his intention of reposing in his general's harem, that "he would not admit any beard but his master's into the seraglio." When the king inquired if he knew to whom he was speaking, the undaunted warrior replied: "Abbas is certainly the king of men, but not of women." This expression so far from exciting the displeasure of Abbas, procured the man a handsome reward*.

Next to the Persians, the Druses are the most jealous people in all Asia†. If a friend or acquaintance were to inquire of another concerning the health of his wife or daughter, or if one friend were to meet another on a journey, and to bring him a good account of the health of the female branches of his family, this enquiry, or this intelligence would irritate a Druse to such a degree, that he would put his wife and daughter to death, as persons who disgraced him, and would seize the first opportunity to dispatch his inquisitive or

* *Chardin, III. p.* 383.
† *Arvieux, III. p.* 315.

officious acquaintance. Enquiries and accounts which in Europe either pass for nothing, or at most only bespeak attention and respect, are certainly fraught with much more meaning in Asia than in our division of the globe.

After the Persians come the Arabs, the Turks, and the Moors, both of Barbary and Hindostan*. Among all these nations, the women of the great are as rigidly secluded, and as inaccessible as in Persia. The wives of opulent and respectable tradesmen, and of the subordinate civil officers, never go to the baths, or visit the tombs of saints, and the graves of their deceased relatives on festivals without being attended by one or more eunuchs, or aged female slaves, who are appointed their governantes, and receive from them the appellation of mother. Even the wives of the common people, never go abroad otherwise than veiled, and in some countries only in the night. The veil in which the eastern females are enveloped, covers every part of the body except the eyes and the tip of the nose. This cau-

* *Arvieux*, as above. *Ricaut*, as above. *Russel*, *p.* 113, 114. *Maillet*, *II. p.* 115, &c. *Höst*, *p.* 103. *Grose*, *I. p.* 193.

tious method of disguising and watching females, renders intrigues, particularly on the part of the men, much more difficult and rare than in the countries of the West, but, at the same time it makes the women much more artful and enterprizing. In the East, the women are almost without exception the seducers. As none, or very few of them can write, they have invented a kind of allegorical language, by means of which they communicate their wishes and resolutions to their lovers. They either form a particular sort of garland of flowers, or fold up bread, straw, salt, wood, and other trifles in a handkerchief, which they send by a trusty slave to some place where they know they will be safe. Every flower, and each of the different articles enveloped in the handkerchief has a particular signification, and in this manner they acquaint their lovers with the time and place in which they intend to meet them. The women of the middling class have various opportunities of seeing their lovers; they either obtain admission for them in female attire as friends, or as the wives of tradesmen, or during their visit to the graves, they secretly elude, for a short time, the observation of their guardians, who are not always incorruptible,

or they change clothes at the baths, and thus go in disguise to the place of assignation. It frequently happens that a company of dissolute women attack strangers whom they may chance to meet in solitary or retired situations, and compel them by force to gratify their desires.

Though the Abyssinians are descendants of the Arabs, they are not so highly addicted to jealousy as the nations properly denominated Orientals, and they are consequently much less rigid in the seclusion of their women. The wives of persons of distinction go abroad when they please, and even pay visits to persons of the other sex without exciting suspicion. The wives and daughters of the lower classes sleep indiscriminately in the same chamber with the husbands and young men, as is customary among the Slavon nations in Europe*. This want of jealousy among the Abyssinians proceeded either from their mixture with some of the negro nations of Africa, who are distitute of that quality, or at least from their proximity to such nations, and the mutual intercourse which has for ages subsisted between them.

* *Bernier, I. p.* 19 .

All travellers have also remarked that the superior casts of the Pagan Hindoos are not accustomed to shut up their women so cautiously as the Moors of Hindostan, and the other Mahometan nations of the East*. Neither are the Hindoo women so closely veiled as the other eastern females; for many Indian women go, like the South Sea islanders, with their bosoms and the upper part of the body entirely naked—a practice which soon becomes as familiar to the Europeans as the uncovered faces and hands of our females†. In many places we even find a community of wives, and in still more, virginity is presented as an acceptable offering to the deities of the country and their priests. We should, however, be egregiously mistaken, were we to conclude from these circumstances, that the Hindoos of the higher casts place equal confidence in the sex with the Europeans. The Hindoos have two other species of adultery besides the crime to which we apply that term‡. The laws of these people declare it adultery of a less criminal kind if a man speaks to, nods, or smiles at a married woman;

* *Chardin and Grose*, as above.
† *Anquetil Voy. p.* 357.
‡ *Gentoo Laws, ch.* 19, *p.* 237, 238.

if he enters into conversation with a female of that description either in the morning, in the evening, at night, or any other unseasonable time, or if he remains with any woman, except his wife, in a garden or any retired place. A second and more culpable species of adultery consists in sending a married women either delicacies or trinkets, or fine clothes. Upon the whole, however, the Hindoos are less severe in the punishment of adultery, than of the illicit commerce of men of low condition with females belonging to the superior casts; for the men of the higher casts are allowed with impunity to connect themselves with women of the lower classes, who esteem it an honour when their superiors condescend to shew them this attention.

The women of the Hindoos are, it is true, more at liberty to leave their apartments and habitations than the other females of the East, but they regard it as an affront if any one stops to look at them. On such occasions they commonly turn away with these words; "look, and die." If a woman converses with a person of the other sex, her nearest relatives excepted, she forfeits her honour, and often her rank or cast. The Bramins, when they

are told of the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes in Europe, significantly shake their hands, and reply with an Indian proverb, which may probably be verified in Asia, and is to this effect: "If you set butter in the sun, you must expect it to melt."*

In Ceylon, women are permitted with impunity to converse in public with any persons of the other sex they please†. In the Maldives, on the contrary, the arrival of Arab missionaries, and the introduction of the Mahometan religion, appear to have produced a great alteration in the original disposition of the inhabitants, and in the condition of the female sex. The women in the Maldivia islands scarcely ever go abroad by day, but only at night. When they pay visits, they are always attended by a slave, who precedes them, and calls to every one who approaches, to keep off. On this notice, men immediately turn out of the way; and even when women meet persons of their own sex, they never salute each other, unless they are intimately acquainted. In the Maldives, it is true, you may pass through the gate into the

* *Grose, I. p.* 240.
† *Knox, p.* 65.

inner court of the house, which, among the Moors, the Arabs, the Turks, and the Persians would be a mortal affront; you must not, however, raise the curtains hung up before the avenues to the apartments, but call out one of the inhabitants of the place by coughing, or some other expedient*. The king's wives very rarely quit the harem, and their apartments have no windows, being lighted solely by lamps, which burn day and night. These apartments are divided into several closets, by tapestry, four or five pieces of which descend from the ceiling. The wives of the sovereign usually reside behind the last of these curtains, which no mortal dares presume to draw, not even their most trusty slaves, unless they are called.

Pallas has observed†, that all the Tartar tribes eastward of the Caspian Sea, and in Siberia, are much more jealous, and shut up or watch their wives with much greater precaution than the nations of Mongol origin. Among the inhabitants of Mount Caucasus, many, on the contrary, entertain sentiments very different from those of all the Orientals; for notwithstanding

* *Pyrard, I. p.* 143.

† *Beschreibung der Mongol. Völkersch. I. p.* 105.

their polygamy, they neither shut up nor watch their wives and daughters, nor do they resent, after the eastern fashion, any violation of their chastity or conjugal fidelity. The Mingrelians and Circassians have a greater regard for their wives in proportion to the number of their lovers. The men and women eat together in company with the whole family, and females listen to, and bear a part, in the presence of their husbands and fathers, in conversations so licentious that Chardin durst not venture to repeat them*. If a Mingrelian surprizes his wife in adultery, he receives a hog from her paramour, with whom, and the guilty woman, he cheerfully regales on the animal. The unrestrained liberty which the females of Caucasus enjoy from their earliest infancy, is the cause that, besides other arts of intrigue, they are instructed in writing and arithmetic, of which not only the nobles, but even the clergy, not excepting the bishops themselves, are in general ignorant†. In other respects, the Mingrelians and their neighbours resemble the negroes and Americans. When the first wife has lost the

* *Tavernier, I. p.* 147. *Chardin, I. p.* 63, &c.
† *Lamberti, p.* 270.

greatest portion of her charms, they take a second, or a third, on which the former becomes the slaves of the latter*.

Notwithstanding the females of the East are in general the more closely confined, and the more wretched in proportion to their own rank and that of their husbands, yet the daughters of the sovereign, both in Persia and Turkey, enjoy extraordinary prerogatives, similar to those of the daughters of kings in Africa and America†. Females of the blood royal, on their marriage, expect their husbands to take no other wife, nor even to keep a concubine. Not many years since, a grand vizir was obliged to put away his wife, to whom he was exceedingly attached, because an antiquated Sultana had become enamoured of his person, and had demanded him of her brother for a husband‡. The husband must observe the same abstinence from other women, even if the bride that is offered him be but a child, or very old, or hundreds of miles off§. Sultanas of four or five years are often united to rich pachas, who are obliged to keep for their

* *Lamberti, p.* 267.
† *Ricaut, I. cap.* 9. *Chardin, I. p.* 233.
‡ *Tott, I. p.* 207.
§ *Ricaut,* as above. *Niebuhr, II. p.* 409.

infant brides a court or state suitable to their birth, which is attended with prodigious expence. Sultan Ibrahim, in the seventeenth century married three of his daughters in so tender an age, that one of them was four times a widow before she had attained the years of puberty. Even when she was given for the fifth time to a rich pacha of eighty, she was still too young to be able to make a man happy. These princesses think it beneath their dignity to accompany their consorts to the distant provinces of which they are generally appointed viceroys. The Sultanas remain in the capital, and squander the treasures wrung by their absent husbands from the wretches subjected to their tyranny.

Excepting the authority exercised by the daughters of kings over their husbands, and which they are said themselves to denote, by carrying a poniard about their persons, there is not one among all the modern Oriental nations of which it may be said, that the men have resigned the sceptre into the hands of the other sex. Greek writers have ascribed to the women of various eastern nations of antiquity, prerogatives which we should seek in vain among the modern inhabitants of the same

regions. We are told, that among the Lycians and various negro nations of Africa, nobility descended from the female, so that the children of noble Lycian women were also noble, even though they were begotten by a slave*. Still more extraordinary, however, or rather wholly unexampled was the authority of the Egyptian women, if they possessed the privileges recorded by Diodorus†. The Egyptians, says that writer, venerated Isis as their greatest deity and benefactress, more highly than any other gods, and even than her husband Osiris, and thence originated the custom that queens were treated with more profound respect, and enjoyed greater prerogatives than kings; and that men, in their marriage contracts, were obliged to promise their future wives implicit obedience in every point. Respecting this authority of queens over kings, and the obedience promised by husbands to their wives in the marriage-contract, all other writers, however, are totally silent. Herodotus‡ and others§, merely relate, that the Egyptian women, contrary to the cus-

* *Herodot. I. p.* 173.
† *Diodor. I. p.* 31, *et ibi Wessel.*
‡ *Herodot. II. p.* 35.
§ *Wessel, ad Diod.* as above.

tom of all the other nations in western Asia, and the north-west of Africa, were engaged in masculine occupations and handicraft businesses, while the men remained at home employed in weaving, and attending to the domestic concerns. This is still the case in most of the regions of the south of Asia; so that this coincidence between the occupations of the women of ancient Egypt, and those of the greatest portion of southern Asia*, proves, independently of other reasons, that the Egyptians were neither descended entirely from the inhabitants of the western half of that division of the globe, nor from the natives of China, where the women are shut up still more closely than even among the Oriental nations.

In treating of the condition of the sex in the East, we must not omit to notice the dancing-girls, as they are denominated, who devote themselves to a life of pleasure, and have but too powerful an influence over the morals of the Orientals, and the happiness of families. Among nations whose kings collect many hundreds of females in their harems, and whose people of distinction keep no less than forty or

* *Meiners Philosoph. Schriften, I. p. 270.*

fifty, where in consequence they are either rare, or must be purchased at an exorbitant rate—among such nations, I say, public women and temporary connections with hired females are more indispensable than in other countries, where unmarried women are neither scarce nor costly. Hence the hiring of girls and women for a time, is permitted in all the regions of the East as a species of marriage, and the contract is made before the same civil authorities as in real matrimony*. For the same reason the dancing-girls in all the great states of Africa and Asia, form a distinct company, class, or sisterhood, which is under the protection of certain magistrates, and pays a stipulated tribute for this protection. In Hindostan, on certain festivals they attend upon the emperor, like all the other companies and guilds, and are regarded as the servants and priestesses of the gods, in whose temples they reside, by whose ministers they are instructed in singing, dancing, and the mysteries of love, before whose images they are accustomed to dance; because the gods are supposed to take as great delight in the lascivious dances of

* *Ricaut, II. ch. 21. Chardin, I. p. 231.*

public women as the kings and grandees*. Among all the Oriental nations there is, indeed, a certain class of females who permit every one indiscriminately to enjoy their charms, and even in public if it is desired†; but most of the kind sisterhood, in Asia and Africa, not only fulfil their calling, by consoling men who have no wives, but tend also to encourage the excessive licentiousness of the Orientals, and hasten the downfal of many families that are spared by the despot and his rapacious vicegerents. All travellers assure us, that the dancing-girls of the East demand extravagant prices for the possession of their persons, that they not only ruin inadvertent youths, but men of the highest distinction, that they sometimes ensnare even monarchs, and give sovereigns to powerful nations; and finally, that by their voluptuous dances and exhibitions they inflame

* On the dancing-girls in Turkey and Egypt, see *della Valle, I. p.* 411, 414. *Maillet, II. p.* 75. *Hasselquist, p.* 73. *Savary, I. p.* 149, 157. *Volney, II. p.* 404: respecting those of Arabia, *Arvieux, III. p.* 19, 27: of Persia, *Chardin, I. p.* 224, &c: of Hindostan, *Grose, I. p.* 138, 139. *Bernier, II. p.* 60. *Sonnerat, I. p.* 34. *Gentil, I. p.* 170, &c. *Anquetil, I. p.* 345. *Tavernier, II. p.* 40: of the south of Asia and China, *Marigny, p.* 73. *Du Halde, II. p.* 60. In China, the dancing-girls are not permitted to reside in the cities.

† *Della Valle,* as above.

the passions of the Orientals even to frenzy. A certain number of these females place themselves under the direction of an old governante, who provides them with clothes, board, and lodging, who receives their earnings, and to whom application must be made when one or more of them are wanted merely for dancing and exhibitions, or for other purposes. Each has a particular price, by which she is called and known. A *toman*, (about two guineas and a half) is the lowest price of a dancing-girl in Persia; but some demand ten, twenty, and even more. When the charms of these females begin to fade, so that they are not considered worth a *toman*, they are dismissed from the society. The dancing-girls of Persia and Hindostan* are clothed in the most superb silks, or gold and silver stuffs, and are covered almost from head to foot with pearls and diamonds, worth, in general, several thousands of pounds. Chardin knew many sensible men, who were so deeply in love with some of these dancing-girls, that they considered it impossible to disengage themselves from their snares, and alledged in excuse of their unhappy propensities,

* *Chardin and Grose*, as above.

that they were bewitched by their enamoratas. These slaves to the tender passion are known by the marks branded all over their bodies, but particularly on the arms and sides. These marks the Persians make with a red-hot iron; the more numerous, and the deeper they are, the more ardent is the passion they bespeak, and the more they hope to convince their charmers of the sincerity of their attachment.

Though the divided possession of these females is diametrically opposite to the sentiments of the Orientals, yet to men so addicted to voluptuousness they cannot fail of being irresistibly seductive; because these dancing-girls are instructed from their earliest infancy in all the arts that tend to inflame the passions, in singing, playing, dancing, and especially in the expression of the transports of love, by looks, attitudes, gestures, and the motions of the body. These supreme delights of sensual love, constitute the only, or at least the principal subject of their dances and exhibitions, in which they often appear entirely naked. All travellers speak with the highest astonishment, and even admiration of the magical effect of the sports of these dancing-girls, and the vio-

lence of the appetites which they thereby excite. In many of the grandees of Hindostan these desires are so insatiable, that they sometimes send in one night for four or five companies of dancing-girls, and when they are almost annihilated, throw themselves into the arms of an Abyssinian slave*. In Egypt there are certain dancing-girls, who besides making a proficiency in these seductive arts, strive to acquire other pleasing accomplishments. These singers are called *Almé*, or the learned, and these Almés receive no female into their number but what has an agreeable voice, possesses some knowledge of rhetoric and the rules of poetry, and a talent for extempore versification. These Almés know by heart the most beautiful elegies on the misfortunes of lovers, or the death of heroes, and by singing these compositions they melt even the obdurate Turks into tears†. Seductive as these dancing-girls have ever been, and still are to the Orientals, they prove the very reverse to Europeans of refined taste and

* *Anquetil*, as above.

† *Savary*, as above. As none but the dancing-girls and their attendants study dancing, music, and theatrical exhibition, those arts and professions are regarded as dishonourable and degrading in the East.

undepraved sentiments*. Notwithstanding the costliness of their attire, not only the extravagant ornaments of these dancing-girls, the innumerable rings, ribbons, and chains, with which their ears, noses, bosoms, hands, arms, fingers, feet, and toes are loaded and covered, but likewise the odious daubing, intended to embellish their cheeks, lips, eyes, eye-brows, and even their hands and nails, are highly disgusting to Europeans. Most of them punctuate the figures of various kinds of flowers upon their faces, and arms; and some even form, by means of a needle and black thread, a circle of that colour round their eyes, which, they think, adds in an extraordinary degree to their animation and fire.

* *Grose and Volney*, as above.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Condition of the Female Sex among the Slavon Nations of Europe.

Among the Slavon nations of our division of the globe, the condition of the sex is certainly more supportable than among the Orientals; but in regard to matrimony, and their general treatment of women and children, they afford abundant proofs that the European Slavons are brethren of the Eastern nations, though certainly of a nobler character than the latter. The European Slavons still keep their wives and daughters much more secluded than the nations of Celtic origin, at least such was their practice within the memory of man. They purchased, and yet continue to purchase their brides, and in general treat their wives as slaves, whom they think it necessary, for the support of their dignity, to oppress, or to degrade at least many steps below themselves.

Among the Russians, the efforts of Peter the Great, and of the empresses of Ger-

man houses who succeeded him, together with the domestication of great numbers of foreigners, and the disposition excited in the people to imitate the Germans and the French, have produced a great revolution in the primitive manners of the nation, at least among the superior classes. Notwithstanding the concurrence of these different causes, however, the common Russians are still actuated by the same narrow, mercantile spirit as formerly in their conduct towards their daughters, and the paternal authority is equally unbounded*, though sons are no longer compelled by blows to marry, and daughters are not dragged by their hair to the altar†. Even during the past century, the Czars assumed as much and still more authority over the children of their subjects than the parents themselves, and whenever they thought fit, commanded any of their unmarried courtiers or nobles to wed this or that female; an order with which they immediately complied, even though they might previously have passed their word to another. When Peter the Great, in

* *Burik, p.* 25. *Georgi's Beschreib. der Nationen des Russischen Reichs, p.* 493.

† *Weber's verändertes Russland, III. p.* 107, 108. See also *Straussen's Reisen, p.* 81.

the early years of his reign, had by an order of this kind prevented the projected nuptials of two lovers, and had occasioned an unhappy union between the betrothed bridegroom and a female whom he did not know, and could not love, he resolved to relinquish the pernicious prerogative exercised by his predecessors, and to interfere no more in matrimonial connexions. In Weber's time, Russian ladies of rank and their daughters were so rigidly confined, that they were never permitted to go abroad except to church, or to visit their nearest relatives. Hence they envied the condition of the sex in Germany not a little, when they were informed by Weber that the women there enjoyed much greater liberty, and received far better treatment. Though this is now greatly altered, and a stranger no longer has occasion to dread a box on the ear if he takes the liberty to kiss the hand of an unmarried Russian lady*, still the relations between man and wife among the common people remain the same, and vestiges of the former servitude of the women may yet be found even among the higher classes. Ladies still appear as

* *Weber, I. p.* 151.

though they would kiss the hands of gentlemen of distinction ; but this expression of Oriental respect is prevented by saluting the fair upon the cheek*. The lower classes of females are doomed to a life of incessant labour and hardship ; they are obliged to put up with the grossest treatment from their husbands, to whose extravagant and violent conduct they are so accustomed as scarcely to make it a subject of complaint†. These women are not fond of stripes for their own sake, nor do they regard them unconditionally as tokens of the affection of their husbands ; but when a man ceases to beat his wife, it is a sure sign that he has either given her up as incorrigible, or that he has wholly attached himself to other women, and gives himself no farther concern about his wife and his domestic affairs : and in these respects, observes Weber‡, the wife of a Russian may certainly affirm, that her husband no longer loves her when he desists from chastising her, either in his frantic fits of intoxication, or for vices to which the Russian women are said to be universally addicted.

* *Coxe, I. p.* 370.
† *Georgi,* as above.
‡ *Weber, I. p.* 151.

Among the Illyrians, as among all the other Slavon nations, brides are sold to the highest bidder*. A bargain of this kind is frequently on foot for months, and even after it is concluded, if another suitor offers an additional keg of *racky*, or brandy, the girl is his. As the women are sold like slaves, so also are they obliged to work like slaves, while the men recline at their ease in their huts. Besides performing all the drudgery both in and out of the house, the wives of the Illyrian peasants make all the stuffs that are required for wearing-apparel and household furniture for the use of the whole family. Hence you seldom meet one of them, even abroad, without her spinning-wheel, which they carry about with them that they may not be a moment unemployed. Their skill in the tanning and preparation of skins and furs, is truly astonishing. They are likewise acquainted with the art of dyeing silk, cotton, woollen and linen stuffs, with colours equally beautiful and permanent: this process they keep a profound secret, and will not communicate even for money. That the Illyrians should, after the eastern fashion, keep concubines besides their

* *Taube, I. p. 68, II. p. 24.*

wives*, will appear the less extraordinary to the reader, since the inhabitants of ancient Illyricum, the modern Morlachians, never suffer their wives to speak to them without prefixing the Oriental formula of—*with your permission;* and since even the nobles of Dalmatia consider it beneath their dignity to sleep in the same bed with their wives. When, therefore, they retire to rest, their wives are obliged to take up their night's lodging on the bare floor, at the foot of the bed†.

Among the Croats and Wallachians‡, the men are as indolent and supine as the Russians, the Illyrians, and the Morlachians, and their women, like the females of those nations, are obliged to perform all the drudgery for them. The Wallachians and Moldavians have retained to the present day the greatest resemblance to the Orientals in their conduct towards the sex. Most of their young unmarried females are still as invisible as in the East. Even at the wedding, the bride eats veiled, and in a separate apartment; nor is the bridegroom permitted to see her face till

* *Taube, I. p.* 64.
† *Fortis, I. p.* 80. *Anton, p.* 130
‡ *Anton,* as above. *Sulzer, II. p.* 352.

after the consummation of the nuptials*. Married women, it is true, may go abroad and pay visits without being prevented by their husbands, or incurring suspicion; but notwithstanding this liberty, they testify their respect for their husbands and other persons of distinction, in the manner customary in the East, that is, by humbly kissing their hands†. The wives of the common Wallachians are not allowed to sit down to table with their husbands, any more than the women of the East, but stand while their husbands are eating, in order to wait upon them‡. As the women of the lowest classes are obliged to labour like those of the Orientals, so the wives of the bojars, or nobles, pass their lives in the same indolence as the inhabitants of the eastern harems§. Their principal occupation consists in paying and receiving visits, and in going to church; sometimes, but very rarely, they employ themselves with the distaff and tambourine. About domestic affairs they give themselves no kind of concern; they scarcely know their own children, who, immediately after their

* *Sulzer, II. p.* 305, 388.
† *Ibid. II. p.* 384.
‡ *Ibid. II. p.* 397.
§ *Ibid.*

birth are put out to nurse, and if boys, are committed to the care of an ignorant Greek, to be instructed in the common Greek language, and in the religion, or rather superstition of their forefathers.

The language of the Crim Tartars contains so many German words, and their political constitution, their domestic arrangements, habits, and manners, bear such an affinity to those of the Germans, that they might be regarded as the only genuine descendants of the Scythians and Goths near the Black Sea, if they were not polygamists like the Oriental nations, and did not conduct themselves towards their wives and mothers in the same manner as the latter. The mothers of Sultanas neither eat with their sons, nor sit down in their presence. Mothers shew the abject submission of slaves to their sons, by whom, on the contrary, they are often ill-treated, and even put to death*.

* See *Peyssonel, II. p.* 246.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Condition of the Female Sex among the Celtic Nations till the conclusion of the Age of Chivalry.

Hitherto I have depicted only the misery and servitude, or the unnatural authority of the fair sex, and my investigations could not have afforded, to my female readers at least, any other pleasure than that which results from the narration of an authentic history, or from the comparison of their own fortunate condition with the unhappy lot of their sisters among most of the nations of the earth. Now, on the contrary, I come to the history of the liberty and happiness of the sex, and my fair readers will not only confess that the men were not every where tyrants, but they will also rejoice that they were born among nations in which parents know how to adorn their daughters with such virtues, and in which the men are capable of duly appreciating these qualifications. The Greeks and Romans themselves were as-

tonished that the Germans and other Celtic nations, who were in a state of barbarism, should pay so much respect to the sex, and allow it such privileges as they had themselves never granted to their women, notwithstanding their boasted civilization. The merit arising from the regard and prerogatives enjoyed by the women of the ancient Celtic nations, belongs jointly, or equally to both sexes. Had not the ancient Germans, Scandinavians, and other people of like origin, even prior to the general introduction of agriculture, been as sensible of the excellent qualities of the heart and mind of their females as of their personal beauty, they would no more have allowed them those privileges than the women would have obtained them, had they not been from the most remote ages, as rich in virtues, intellectual endowments, and useful knowledge, as they were in exterior charms. The comparison of the conduct of different nations towards the sex will teach my fair readers better than all the maxims and novels in the world, by what standard they ought to chuse their lovers and husbands. Men of a sensual and grovelling disposition, of narrow minds, and unpolished understandings prepare for their wives the lot of

the eastern females—servitude, coldness, and neglect. Such men are not actuated by love, but only by desire, and when their appetites are satiated, they become as indifferent to the charms of their wives as they were from the first insensible to their talents, attainments and virtues. On the contrary, the more noble is the disposition, the more cultivated the understanding, and the more enlarged the mind of the youth and the husband, the more confidently the lover and the wife may expect to be treated by them, as I shall now shew that the sex was treated by our generous ancestors.

Though the youthful females of the German and other Celtic nations were more beautiful than the women of any of the other people of whom I have yet treated, still they were not subjected to the same confinement as those of the Orientals and European Slavons, because they might be abandoned without danger to their virgin modesty as the safest protection of their chastity. The seduction of virgins was as rare among the ancient Germans as adultery*; and if, in an unlucky moment a female surrendered the

* *Tacitus, de Mor. German. ch.* 18, 19.

flower of her innocence, she could never hope to obtain a husband, however rich, beautiful, or nobly descended she might be. Among all the Celtic nations, especially the Germans, and the inhabitants of the north, the puberty of both sexes was developed much more slowly than among the other nations of the earth, so that in Germany and Scandinavia, maidens and youths at the period of their perfect maturity were full twice as old as girls and boys in the East*. This tardy expansion of their youthful bodies, and the consequent lateness of their loves and marriages, not only prolonged the period of fecundity in both sexes, and enabled handsome, vigorous, and healthy parents to beget children like themselves†, but were likewise productive of this natural result, that young females were fit for very different purposes from those for which alone they were thought in the East to be designed, for the

* *Tacitus, de Mor. German. ch.* 18, 19. In Cæsar's time, it was accounted disgraceful in Germany for a young man to have known a woman before he had completed his twentieth year. The longer he abstained from this indulgence, so much the more honourable it was considered.

† *Tacit. c.* 20. *Sera juvenum Venus, eaque inexhausta pubertas : nec virgines festinantur ; eadem juventa, similis proceritas, pares, validique miscentur, ac robora parentum liberi referunt.*

care and education of their children, for the management of the domestic concerns, and were capable not only of governing themselves, but also of giving counsel to their husbands. The German and other Celtic maidens were not regarded, like the eastern brides of eight or nine years, as beings utterly destitute of freedom of will, as children both in mind and body, and as the property of their fathers; they were not, like them, sold for slaves without their consent; or, contrary to their inclination, were not bargained for by men whom they had never seen, and whom they could no more love than they could expect to be loved by them, and then immediately consigned to the rod and the superintendence of wretched eunuchs. Among the Germans and other Celtic nations, fathers never assumed such absolute authority over their children as the Slavons and the Orientals. Parents among the former might advise or dissuade, might prevent their children, blinded by an imprudent passion, from rushing into ruin; but they could not compel their sons or daughters to marry without their consent, and against their inclination. The presents made by the bridegroom to the bride shewed, as Tacitus observes, that the youthful wife

was not received into the house of her husband as a slave, but as the companion of his life, as the partner of all his joys and sorrows, of all his dangers, and of all his labours. In ancient Germany, the bridegroom did not present his wife with splendid attire or costly ornaments, but with flocks, more or less numerous, a horse ready bridled and saddled, and lastly, a shield, a lance, and a sword*. As long as the Celtic nations were more devoted to pastoral than agricultural pursuits, and the cultivation of the earth was accounted disgraceful or unworthy of freemen, so long the common people relinquished the labours of the field to the women and children, and the aged; while the young and vigorous warrior attended only to the duties of the chace and of war†. But when the Germans and other Celtic tribes divided the soil, and thus acquired an immoveable property, when they began to be convinced of the importance of agriculture, and gradually obtained a more perfect knowledge of the art, the nobles, it is true, still continued as they had formerly done‡, to

* *Tacit. ch.* 18.

† See the testimonies relative to all the Celtic nations in *Pelloutier, I. p.* 345.

‡ *Tacit. ch.* 25.

employ their vassals or freedmen in the cultivation of the soil; but the common people who had none, themselves undertook the labours of the field, leaving to the women more especially the superintendence of their domestic concerns, and the education of their children. Females of the highest rank were not in ancient times ashamed of these domestic duties. Princesses and the wives of nobles suckled their children, and nourished them with their own blood*, and managed the concerns of the domestic economy†. When the men were engaged in distant expeditions, or long-protracted wars, they were accompanied by their wives and children. These objects, according to the testimony of Tacitus and all other Roman authors‡, most powerfully stimulated the valour of the ancient Germans; they were the most solemn witnesses, and the warmest panegyrists of their achievements. When the German heroes were wounded, they had

* *Tacit, ch.* 20.

† Cæteris servis, non in nostrum morem descriptis per familiam ministeriis utuntur. Suam quisque sedem, suos penates regit. Frumenti modum dominus, aut pecoris, aut vestis, ut colono injungit: et servus hactenus paret. Cætera domus officia uxor ac liberi exsequuntur. *Tacit. ch.* 25.

‡ *Ibid. ch.* 7, 8.

recourse to their mothers or their wives, who sucked, cleansed, and dressed their wounds; all the women of Germany and the North being thoroughly skilled in the virtues of simples*. Even during the engagement, wives and mothers mingled with the ranks of the combatants, carrying them refreshments, and renewing their intreaties and exhortations to fight valiantly, that they and their children might not fall into the hands of their foes, and be doomed to inevitable slavery†. Wives and daughters provided with the attire and the arms of men, very often fought most courageously beside their husbands and fathers, and hence the Romans frequently observed the bodies of armed women in the field of battle among the slain‡. When the German warriors, unable to withstand the attack of a superior enemy, began to yield, the women by their lamentations and reproaches very often rouzed and inflamed their drooping courage to such a degree, that they returned to the

* *Mallet, Introd. dans l'histoire de Dannemarc. ch.* 12, *p.* 293. *Edit. de Geneve.* 1763, 12*mo.*

† *Tacit.* as above.

‡ *Schütz über den Lehrbegriffen der Alten Teutschen und Nord. Völker von dem Zustande der Seelen nach dem Tode, p.* 236.

charge, and attacked the enemy with redoubled fury, in order to rescue the dear pledges of their love, their wives and children, from captivity*. When intreaties, tears and reproaches could not prevail on the dismayed combatants to renew the charge, the women and girls mounted the rampart with which the German camps were surrounded, placing themselves in hostile array against their dastardly brothers and husbands, as well as against the enemy, and with spears and swords making no less havoc among their fugitive countrymen, than among their victorious pursuers†. When, therefore, the Romans had routed the German armies, after the most obstinate engagements, they had frequently such bloody battles to fight at the rampart, upon which the wives, sisters, and daughters of the slaughtered warriors had posted themselves, that the conquerors acknowledged they could not have been victorious had the men displayed the same invincible intrepidity as the women‡. As the love of liberty overcame the tenderness

* *Tacit. ch.* 7, 8.

† *Schütz*, as above, and *Pelloutier, I. p.* 514, &c. have collected the records of these examples of bravery exhibited by the German and other Celtic women.

‡ *Schütz, p.* 236, 238. *Pelloutier*, as above.

for husbands and children, so the dread of servitude far outweighed the fear of death in the bosoms of the generous females of all the Celtic nations. When these heroines were surrounded and disarmed, and saw no possibility of escaping the horrors of everlasting slavery, they generally dispatched each other, or hanged themselves, having previously strangled their infants, or dashed out their brains against stones. Such was the conduct of the women of the Teutones, the Cimbri, the Catti, the Alemanni, and the Cantabri, after their husbands had been defeated by the Romans, and themselves made captives by the victors*. When Marius had vanquished the Teutones, a little band of noble females, who had been spared by the sword of the conqueror, declared their readiness to surrender if the Roman general would grant them three conditions. These were, that they should not be publicly sold as slaves; that their chastity should not be violated; and that they should be permitted to devote themselves to the service of Vesta, or some other chaste goddess, for their chastity they were determined to preserve as inviolably as the Vestals. When the

* The authorities may be seen in *Pelloutier*, as above.

obdurate victor rejected the terms of these noble Teuton females, they dispatched with undaunted courage both themselves and their children; and the same conduct was pursued by the women of the Catti and Alemanni when Antonius would not take their lives. The Roman emperor asked the captive German females, whether they would rather die than be sold for slaves. They unanimously preferred death to slavery, and when, nevertheless, the conqueror caused them, conformably with the Roman law, to be sold, they all killed themselves, and many dispatched their children also*. This valour and this love of liberty were perpetuated undiminished among the Celtic fair till the commencement of the present (18th) century, and I sincerely hope that these virtues of the mothers may be transmitted unimpaired to the latest generations. The history of the middle ages exhibits in every nation numerous examples of the masculine, or rather more than masculine intrepidity, with which females defended their native towns and their children against hostile invasion†.

* *Pelloutier*, as above.

† *St. Foix*, in his *Mémoires sur Paris*, and *Thomas sur les Femmes*, *p.* 56, 57.

Wives, who were so faithful, so chaste, and so tender; mistresses of families, who were so conscientious, industrious, and intelligent; mothers, who were so careful and affectionate; and partners, who were so courageous, and so strongly attached to liberty, as the women of the ancient Germans, and other Celtic nations, assuredly deserved a different kind of treatment from the infantine wives of the Orientals, who in general gave themselves no more concern about their children than about domestic affairs, and suffered themselves, without sorrow or regret, to be shut up in the harems of the enemies, or of the sons and successors of their former lords*. Our ancestors would not have been what they actually were, the noblest of men—they must have been monsters had they not acknowledged the merits and excellencies of their wives, and rewarded them with the most distinguished respect, with the most faithful and tender attachment. They possessed themselves too many talents and

* It is well known that among all polygamic nations, only those concubines of the sovereign who have borne him children or been honoured with his company, are shut up in what is called the Old Seraglio; those who are still virgins being separated and regarded as the harem of his successor.

virtues to be insensible to the virtues and endowments of their wives.

While other nations excluded women as impure from the service of the gods, from the sacred places, and from all participation in their religious rites and ceremonies, our forefathers drew their virgins and their wives to the altars of the gods, and not only admitted them to their festivals and temples, but even initiated them into the most secret mysteries of the druids*. Instead of believing, with almost all the less generous nations, that women communed only with evil deities, and could do mischief by their aid, or by means of other wicked arts, the ancient Germans ascribed to their wives and daughters something particularly sacred, a peculiar disposition to a more intimate connexion with the good deities, and the gift of prophecy resulting from that commerce†. They generally honoured some virgin endued with that faculty as a living goddess. Such were Velleda and Arminia, before and at the time of Tacitus. Whole nations hung upon the divine lips of these virgins, or waited at a respectful distance from the

* *Dreyer, II. p. 643.*
† *Tacit. de Mor. German. ch. 8.*

lofty towers in which they dwelt, for the oracles they might pronounce relative to the contests of nations, or important enterprizes*. In distant military expeditions they were usually accompanied by these venerated prophetesses, whom they regarded as interpreters of the will of the gods, and whose answers they more cheerfully obeyed than the summons of their kings or the commands of their generals. Unlike all other nations, who most carefully excluded women from all participation in public business and public diversions, the ancient Germans and Scandinavians appointed females of noble birth to preside over their public amusements, and consulted them on the most important affairs of the state†. Finally, while most other nations banished their women from the presence of the ministers of justice, not even permitting them to complain of any injury that was done them, our forefathers secured the rights of the women no less than of the men; they placed them as judges beside princes and nobles, or selected them alone as arbitresses be-

* *Tacit. Hist. IV. ch.* 65.

† *Tacit. ch.* 8. *Plutarch, VII. p.* 13. *Keisler Antiq. septent. p.* 372, 373.

tween kings and whole nations. Thus the inhabitants of Cologne, and the German tribes eastward of the Rhine, chose Civilis, a Gallic prince, and the wise Velleda as umpires*: and the Gauls† demanded of the Carthaginians, that when they had any cause of complaint against them, the dispute should be adjusted by their wives, and that both parties should abide by their decisions. It was not, therefore, the effect of chivalry, but an ancient Celtic custom that still continued to predominate, which, during the whole of the middle ages, so frequently led princes and lords to select females, celebrated for their wisdom and their love of justice as umpires, and among these examples there are many, in which the arbitresses decided in favour of the adversaries of their husbands or relations‡.

As chivalry, tournaments, and minstrels were not the original productions of the eleventh century, but were formed upon more early models, so the respectful love of the greatest princes and knights of the middle ages was neither absolutely

* *Tacit. Hist. IV. p.* 65.
† *Plutarch*, as above.
‡ *Dreyer, II. p.* 643.

new, nor a mere consequence of chivalry. The love of Ossian's heroes is as pure, as tender, as infinitely superior to the brutal, contemptuous passion of Homer's, as was ever the amorous enthusiasm of any knight-errant*. But as some of the learned are still disposed to doubt the authenticity and antiquity of Ossian's poems, I shall demonstrate by incontrovertible facts, that among the ancient Germans and other northern nations, love incited to achievements as transcendent, was subjected to trials as severe, and was capable of sacrifices as great, as ever shed lustre on the passion of the most irreproachable knights.

Pure as were the morals of our remote ancestors, chaste as were their marriages, and unspotted as was the virgin honour of their daughters, so frequent were also impetuous passions, which difficulties and dangers tended rather to strengthen than extinguish. All the chronicles of the Germanic tribes are filled with histories of the ravishment of virgins and brides, either by artifice or by force, though their codes attached heavy penalties to the attempt. The sole motive for these enterprizes in

* This remark has already been made by *Millar*, *p.* 43, and by many other writers.

the earliest ages was all-conquering love, for females of the noblest birth were not entitled to the smallest portion of the paternal possessions, and the ravishers forfeited the dowries, which, from the most remote antiquity it was customary to give with the daughters of nobles and gentlemen. These frequent rapes produced in the earliest periods the same phenomena as in the middle ages; bold projects were formed by daring adventurers to rescue the stolen and injured fair. According to the ancient chronicles and traditions of the north, a Swedish king had a daughter named Thora, who was celebrated throughout all the northern regions for her extraordinary beauty. To preserve this inestimable jewel from the profane hands of robbers, he shut up his daughter in a strong castle, and there consigned her to the care of a trusty servant*. The keeper of the fair Thora, unable to resist her charms, formed the resolution not to deliver up the princess either to her father, or to any lover or suitor. The disconsolate father tried every means to obtain access to the fortress, but all his efforts were unavailing. Overwhelmed with despair, he

* *Mallet*, as above, *p.* 299.

caused it to be proclaimed in all the regions of the north, that the man who should subdue the ravisher of his child, and rescue her from his power, should receive her hand let his rank be what it would. Among all the youthful heroes who contended for the beauteous prize, the Danish prince Regner was the most fortunate; he broke into the castle, delivered the princess, and obtained her for his wife—an enterprize which, as he himself says in the fragments of his lyric compositions that are yet extant, placed him in the rank of the heroes of the north.

Dangerous enterprizes and heroic achievements were in the remote ages not only the surest means of acquiring extended fame, and the love, regard, and favours of kings and nations, but they were better calculated to gain the hearts of the generous fair than high rank, riches, or the greatest personal attractions. The young females of the North often rejected the suit of princes, their superiors in birth and their equals in beauty, but who had not signalized themselves by a series of heroic deeds. The fair-haired Harold, one of the most powerful lords or princes of Norway, say the ancient chronicles, was the object of the secret wishes of the fairest princesses

of his time, on account of his extraordinary beauty, and the proofs of valor and other royal virtues which he had exhibited. He, however, gave his affections to none of the damsels who thus languished for him, but offered his hand and his heart to the beauteous Gida, the daughter of a Norman prince. Gida returned for answer, that Harold the Fair had not yet distinguished himself sufficiently to be worthy of her, and that he should never possess her till he had achieved the conquest of all Norway. So far from being offended at this answer, the gallant youth immediately prepared for the enterprize, after the fortunate completion of which Gida was to be his. Harold, in a short time subdued all Norway, and with that kingdom, the heart of the haughty and ambitious Gida*.

The love of the German and northern warriors was not less refined than the passion of Ossian's heroes, or of the most celebrated knights of the middle ages. After the death of his beloved Thora†, the great king Regner Lodbrog, the Hercules or Theseus of ancient Scandinavia, landed on the coast of Iceland, on the very

* *Mallet*, as above, *p.* 305, 306.
† *Ibid. p.* 300, &c.

spot where the fairest shepherdess in the whole island was tending her flock. When the maiden perceived the fleet approaching the shore, she washed her hands and face, and adorned her golden hair which descended to her heels. All the king's attendants who had landed, and had beheld the Iceland shepherdess, were captivated with her extraordinary beauty, which, on their return to the fleet, they could not forbear praising in the highest strains of rapture. These concurrent testimonies of admiration excited the curiosity of the king, and he sent to invite the shepherdess to come on board his ship. The maiden refused to comply with the king's invitation, till he had promised that her honour should sustain no injury. Having given his word, the shepherdess presented herself before the king: no sooner did he behold her, than, struck with astonishment, he thus began to sing: "Mighty Odin! what soothing, what unexpected consolation wouldst thou bestow on me, if it should please this young and beauteous shepherdess to join her hand in an everlasting union with mine!"—The modest maiden, regarding the exclamation of the king as mockery, or flattery, replied in verse, that some mishap would certainly befal the

brave and magnanimous Regner, if he violated the promise he had given her. "I have saluted the king," continued she, "and now I request him to send me back to my parents and my flock." The prudence, modesty, and propriety of the damsel's behaviour inflamed the love of the king still more, and he therefore made her an offer to take her to his court, and provide for her in such a manner that she should be the envy of all her companions. Regner seconded these proposals with a magnificent robe, embroidered in silver, which had been worn by his consort, Thora, and which he presented to the shepherdess with these words: "take this costly garment, beauteous maiden, that is worthy of thy charms. It was made by the fair hand of my Thora, and it will ever remain dear to him who is styled by all the North the prince of heroes." "No," replied Aslauga, for that was the name of the shepherdess, "I should be ashamed to wear the magnificent robe of queen Thora. I am not deserving of such splendid attire. Coarse black cloth best becomes a poor shepherdess who resides in a lowly cottage, and wanders about on the sands of the sea-shore tending her flock." When the king still more urgently in-

treated her to acquiesce in his wishes, the shepherdess declared herself determined not to comply till she was convinced of his fidelity, and the constancy of his love. "Let the king," said she, "first terminate the expedition on account of which he left his kingdom, and if he then entertains the same sentiments towards me which he now expresses, I will cheerfully accompany those whom he shall send to fetch me." The monarch was at length obliged to submit to the conditions of the fair shepherdess. The expedition was speedily and successfully terminated. The victorious and amorous Regner again landed on the shores of Iceland, and the beautiful Aslauga without hesitation suffered herself to be conducted to the king. She, however, insisted that the nuptials should not take place till their arrival in Denmark, and that they should be celebrated in the presence of the whole court; and notwithstanding the impatient ardour of his passion, Regner acquiesced. In order to form a just conception of the prodigious difference that exists between the dispositions of different persons, the reader needs only to figure to himself how an eastern monarch and an eastern female would have conducted themselves in similar cir-

cumstances, and compare their behaviour with that of the northern hero and the Iceland shepherdess. This last narrative is extracted, like the preceding ones, from the most ancient northern records, whose authenticity has never been doubted by any intelligent antiquary, and the passion of the brave king Lodbrog for the Icelandic shepherdess has been handed down in the national traditions to the present time. Even though all that the ancient chronicles record of the hero should not be true, still these traditions demonstrate, that the fictitious achievements and adventures ascribed to him are consistent with the taste or the spirit of antiquity.

As an argument against the affection and regard which the ancient Germans and nothern nations manifested for the sex, might be adduced that tenet of the Scandinavian religion, by which women were excluded from the Valhalla, or the blissful mansions of Odin and his immortal heroes*. The uninformed might perhaps find some analogy between this doctrine and the severe sentiments of the Koran; at least this tenet of the pagan Scandinavians occasioned the remark of

* *Dreyer, II. p. 646. Schütz, p. 238.*

Keisler, which Schütz observes, could only have been made by a bachelor; that probably the reason why females were excluded from Valhalla was, lest the tranquillity and the joys of the blest should be interrupted by the volubility of their tongues and perpetual brawls. For my part, however, I am convinced, that neither the Germans nor the northern nations of antiquity denied their beloved wives admittance to the habitations of the blest, or rendered those happy mansions difficult of access to them. In none of the Greek and Roman writers is there a single passage that would favour such an insinuation; they contain, on the contrary, a number of facts whence sentiments directly opposite may be inferred. One of the principal arguments on this subject is the custom, which obliged the favorite wives of many of the Gothic and Teutonic tribes, either to take away their lives on the graves of their husbands, or to suffer others to dispatch them, in order that they might accompany the deceased to the other world. This custom necessarily presupposes that the ancient German and northern tribes must have held this opinion in common with most of the nations of the globe, that the state of man after

death is a more blissful continuation of his earthly life, and that in this future existence his relations, pleasures, and occupations will be the same as in the present. In all probability, the doctrine that women were not admitted into the happy abodes of the gods and heroes, originated in those times which gave birth to the notion, that warriors must have died in battle, or of a violent death, in order to be received into the society of Odin and his heroes. This notion predominated not only among all the Celtic and German tribes, but also among the northern nations in those ages to which their most ancient traditions relate, and in which they began to commit depredations in all the seas and great rivers of Europe. The distant and perilous expeditions undertaken by the Normans in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and also in the succeeding centuries, more and more inflamed the martial spirit of the northern heroes, filled their bosoms with the desire of surpassing their forefathers, excited them, as the crusades did the knights of the middle ages, to still more adventurous deeds and feats of valor, and by means of the most extravagant military or chivalrous enthusiam, at length produced the unnatural idea, that only such were worthy of the

name of men, and of the society of Odin and his heroes, who had either fallen in battle, or lost their lives by the swords of friends and of priests. When it began to be the received opinion, that even men could not obtain access to the halls and courts of Odin, unless they died like heroes, or at least by a violent death, it was impossible to make any exceptions with respect to women and servants; and they were accordingly taught to believe, that the latter could not attain to a participation in the same happiness as their husbands and masters, except by dying for them, or with them. If, therefore, the northern nations in ancient times maintained, that women could not obtain admission into the abodes of bliss, unless they had the courage to die with their husbands; still they cannot be accused of any disesteem of the other sex, or of any injustice towards it, because the gates of Valhalla were opened to the women upon the very same terms as to the men.

Many of my readers have probably felt some surprize at the ancient German custom alluded to above, in consequence of which, females of the noblest extraction, though they were supplied on their marriage with a quantity of apparel and or-

naments for their persons, yet received no dowry whatever, and after the death of their fathers could not prefer any claim to the family possessions, even if they had no brothers to succeed them*. This denial of dowry, and disability to inherit the patrimony of their ancestors would seem to betray parsimony and cruelty on the part of fathers, brothers, and other male heirs, towards their daughters, sisters, and relatives. But all these wise regulations of our progenitors were designed to perpetuate noble families, and to preserve their hereditary possessions entire, and not to injure and oppress the sex. Though German females on their marriage received no dowry, and were not admitted after the death of their fathers to a share of the patrimony, yet our liberal-minded ancestors by other excellent laws made such a provision for them, that they might well dispense with those advantages. As long as they continued unmarried, females resided on the family estates, and after the death of their fathers, either their brothers or the next male heirs were obliged to maintain them, and to make the customary provisions for them

* See *Grupens Uxor Theotisca*, and *Gebauer Dissert. VII.* and *XIII.*

on their marriage. The day after their nuptials, wives received a settlement from their husbands, and on their decease a jointure, on which they could live in a manner suitable to their rank, without being dependent on the bounty of the children or next male heirs of the husband. When this settlement and jointure consisted of immoveable property, they could not, indeed, be granted without the consent of the heirs*, and after the death of the

* Among the Celtic nations, there were some who differed widely from our forefathers, both in regard to the rights of inheritance, and the authority possessed by husbands and fathers. Among the Cantabrians, if Strabo's information be correct, females alone inherited the property of their parents, and brothers received a marriage-portion from their sisters. Among the Gauls, *(Cæsar de Bello Gallico, Lib. VI. ch.* 19,) fathers and husbands possessed the power of life and death over their children and wives, and this horrible prerogative even devolved, on their decease to their male heirs. When a person of distinction happened to die, if there was reason for the slightest suspicion that his wife had accelerated his death, his relations, as Cæsar informs us, tortured the widow like a slave, and put her to the most cruel death if her pangs extorted from her a confession of her guilt. Among the Gauls, brides received dowries as well as other gifts. The husband set apart a portion of his property equal to the amount of the dowry, and the income of the fund formed by both, accumulated and devolved to the survivor. All these Gallic customs that are mentioned by Cæsar, I consider as innovations introduced among those people by their acquaintance with the Romans. The German nations also very soon adopted the Roman laws relative to dowry and

possessor, reverted to the family of the husband; for, according to the ancient German laws, only the males, who were able to defend their possessions, could be the real proprietors of immoveable effects. The possessor for the time being only enjoyed the use of the family estates, which he was not at liberty to alienate either by deed of gift or by sale. Sons inherited the family possessions, not only by the will of their fathers, but by the usage of their ancestors, and immoveable goods could not be affected by any testamentary bequest; for which reason the next male heirs were actually co-proprietors, even during the life-time of the possessors for the time being*. But though the females of the ancient Germans could neither inherit the family estates, nor hold any possessions by right of property, they, however, enjoyed the same liberty as the men, to manage the possessions given or entrusted to them for life, and to expend

inheritance; but I am much more surprised that the Gauls should have borrowed from that people, the laws respecting the power of fathers and husbands. This circumstance at least demonstrates that the Gauls, prior to their intermixture with the Franks, were not so gallant a nation as they afterwards became.

* *Dreyer's vermischte Schriften, I. p.* 97.

the income of them in whatever manner they pleased. They were perfect mistresses in their houses, and in their domestic concerns, and the mothers of kings and princes were often guardians of their sons during their minority, and regents over their subjects and dominions. As early as the time of Tacitus, there were several tribes in Germany and Britain, who were governed and even led to war by queens. The German and Celtic nations, therefore, never treated their wives and daughters, in their laws, as silly children unfit to take care of themselves; but the *cura sexus* was totally different from the tutelage of minors, even when, after the introduction of the Roman laws, females were allowed to possess immoveable effects in right of property, but were not permitted to alienate them, or to appear in a court of justice, without the aid of a person of the other sex*.

From these considerations, it must be obvious, that in the exclusion of females from the inheritance to, and right of property in family possessions, our ancestors no more designed to do injustice to their wives, widows, and daughters, than to im-

* *Selchow Elementa Jur. Germ. Vol. I. p.* 642.

pose disgraceful shackles on their own sex, by limiting the male proprietors of such estates to a mere life-interest in them. If therefore, some rich heiresses, or destitute females of opulent houses, should be disposed to think ill of our forefathers for having excluded the sex from the possession and arbitrary disposal of family estates; they will perhaps be reconciled with the ancient German nations, when they are informed, that no sooner did the Germans become acquainted with foreign laws, more favourable in this respect to the fair sex, than they immediately relinquished the ancient customs of their ancestors for the purpose of adopting them.

Among the German nations, who, at the period of the great migration, settled in the conquered provinces of the Roman empire, the Lombards in Italy, and the Visigoths in Spain, were the most ready to borrow the customs and the laws of the Romans whom they had vanquished. Among the Lombards, as early as the fifth century, a man might in a dangerous illness make his last will in bed*; whereas among the Saxons, even in the twelfth century, in which the *Sachsenspiegel*

* *Sex Longob. p.* 1030.

(Saxon mirror) was written, no gentleman was allowed to make a bequest of moveable property, unless he was strong enough to mount his charger with sword and shield, from a stone of the height of an ell*. While the Saxon gentry were restricted from alienating their estates and vassals, except by permission of their relatives, and before a judicial tribunal†; among the Visigoths, persons without children enjoyed perfect liberty to bequeath their property by will‡; and among the Visigoths as well as Lombards, fathers, whether in health or upon their death-beds, might by will dispose of a considerable portion of the family possessions for the benefit of their daughters, or of favorite sons. Among the Lombards, a father who had several sons, might leave to him whom he loved best a third more than to the others§, and if he had but one son and one daughter, he might bestow on the latter one-fourth of his whole property‖. Finally, if a person had only legitimate daughters, but natural sons, the laws of the

* *Sachsenspiegel, p.* 129.
† *Ibid. p.* 127.
‡ *Lex Wisigoth. p.* 1066.
§ *Ibid. p.* 1085.
‖ *Ibid. p.* 1080.

Lombards allowed the father to bequeath half of his property to the daughters, one third to the sons, and one sixth to the lawful heirs*. At the same time, the same laws subjected females to a perpetual curatorship, so that they durst not give or otherwise alienate any part of their property either moveable or not, without the knowledge and consent of their guardians†.

The Visigoths adopted the Roman laws of inheritance with scarcely any alteration‡. Daughters, sisters, and granddaughters were entitled to equal shares with their brothers, and for this, the Visigoth legislators assigned the same reason, and in the same words as the Roman laws; "for it is but just," say they, "that those whom Nature has allied, should not be divided by the regulations of hereditary succession"§. To these examples, and the alteration of the laws of these German nations, it must incontestibly be ascribed that, in Germany properly so called, as early as the thirteenth century, that is,

* *Sex Visigoth, p.* 967, 968.
† *Ibid. p.* 982. *Lex Goth, p.* 205.
‡ *Ibid. Lib. IV. Til. II. p.* 1957, 1958.
§ "Nam justum omnino est, ut quos propinquitas naturæ consociat, hereditariæ successionis ordo non dividat."

nearly two hundred years before the formal adoption of the Roman law, hereditary estates began to be alienated without the consent of the legal heirs, that females began to succeed to them as well as to feudal possessions, and that a community of property between husband and wife was introduced*.

The wisdom and generous spirit of our ancestors are as strikingly displayed in the punishments attached to offences committed against the weaker sex, as in their other regulations. While they punished the murder of a Roman or a vassal with only half as much severity as that of a freeman out of their midst, they attached twice or thrice as heavy a penalty to the murder of a woman who had borne, and was yet capable of bearing children, as to that of a freeman†. In like manner,

* *Schmidt's Geschichte der Teutschen, III. p.* 153. First Edit. *Gebauer, p.* 239. *Struve de Jure Villicorum, p.* 324. *Scheidtii Mantissa Document. p.* 295. The last-mentioned work contains a remarkable document relative to the sale of two hides of land by the lords of Plesse, in which they say that they concluded this bargain, *de unanimi consensu uxorum nostrarum et cohæredum nostrorum et filiarum nostrarum.* This deed is dated in 1234, and consequently proves, that the Saxon law began to admit of some exceptions in ancient Germany, which had undergone the least alteration.

† *Lex Sal. and Ripuar. p.* 61, 89, 131. *Lex Alemann. p.* 226. *Lex Longob.* p. 982. *Lex Bav. Art. XIII.*

other acts of violence committed against females, whether married or single, were expiated with much heavier fines than those offered to men. Whoever called a freewoman a whore, or a witch, forfeited almost as much as if he had killed a freeman. If a person had uncovered or touched the finger of a free woman against her will, he was obliged to pay fifteen schillings, or the same penalty as if he had cut off the middle finger of a man*. If he touched her arm he was fined thirty schillings, the sum levied for striking off the thumb of a freeman†. If he ventured above the elbow, he had to pay thirty-five schillings; but if he had the temerity to touch her bosom, he was fined forty schillings; and no higher penalty was inflicted for cutting off the nose, or three fingers of a warrior‡. The ancient northern nations were equally, if not still more severe. A kiss snatched from a female against her will was punished with exile, and the same offence committed with the consent of the fair one, but without the knowledge of her father or husband, in-

* *Lex Sal. p.* 52, 67.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Ibid.*

curred a fine of three marks of silver*. The Allemanni and Bavarians, it is true, were less rigorous than the Franks and Scandinavians, but they attached a punishment at least twice as severe to offences committed against women, as to injuries offered to men†. A bloodless blow inflicted on a free Alleman or Bavarian cost only one schilling, but if the sufferer was of the fair sex, the penalty was doubled. If any person deranged the hair of a woman, he was fined six *solidi*, but if he uncovered her in such a manner that her knees could be seen, he had to pay twelve, which was the compensation required for a deep and dangerous wound inflicted on the head of a freeman.

It is impossible to conceive a greater contrast between nations of similar origin than that presented by the vanquished Romans, and the victorious Germans who established themselves in the Roman provinces. The Romans were degraded by all the vices characteristic of enervated and degenerate nations; by effeminacy, unnatural propensities, base dissimulation,

* *Mallet Introd. dans l'histoire de Dannemarc, p.* 321, 322.

† *Sex Alaman. p.* 221, 236. *Bavar. p.* 284.

abject submission, disgraceful cunning and cowardice, and more than all by a sordid spirit of self-interest which banished from their bosoms every generous sentiment. The German victors, therefore, conceived such a sovereign contempt for the conquered Romans, that the very name of Roman became a contumelious appellation, and *romanizáre* was equivalent with to lie, and to deceive*. The Romans, on the other hand were filled with the highest admiration, not only of the valor, but also of the love of justice, the chastity and other virtues of their conquerors†. They themselves acknowledged that they were put to shame by the barbarous victors; that wherever the Goths and Vandals established their sway, many ancient abuses were corrected; that equity and justice were there administered, that the weak, the widow, and the orphan were protected from oppression, and that criminals were punished with severity. They regarded it as a most surprizing circumstance, that the Goths and Vandals had amended the Romans themselves, and

* *Grotii Hist. Goth. Proleg. p.* 33.

† *Ibid. and Salvian. de Gubern. Dei. Lib. VII. p.* 129. *Mallet, ch. xii. p.* 312, 313.

rendered them more chaste; and that places polluted by the vices of the vanquished had been purified by the innocence of the conquerors. The Greeks and Romans of Italy and Africa, accordingly dreaded nothing so much as to fall again under the dominion of the Greek emperors. But the innocence and virtues which the victors brought with them from their forests, inaccessible to luxury, were not of long duration. The Germans experienced the same fortune as the Greeks and Romans had done in Asia, and as all not thoroughly civilized nations must experience, who subdue people more opulent and more luxurious than themselves; they did not long continue to amend the vanquished, but with their arts and sciences they also adopted their vices. The contagion of Roman manners is evinced in the laws of the Burgundians, of the Lombards, and of the Visigoths, which enumerate a multitude of new crimes and punishments that would be sought in vain in the codes of the Salic and Ripuaric Franks, the Frisians and Saxons, the Allemanni and Bavarians. The corruption of the German nations who had established themselves in Roman provinces, is demonstrated in a manner still more striking, in the capitulations of

the monarchs of the Franks. The laws of Charlemagne, and of Louis the Pious, are so many monuments of the anarchy and depravity of most of the nations subject to the Frankish sceptre. All these laws abound with punishments, with repeated and aggravated punishments, for the violence and exactions of the imperial governors and officers; for the frequent oppression, persecution, and plunder of the weak by the strong; for the corruptness and partiality of judges; for perjury, false witness and forgery; for the extortion of unjust imposts; and finally, for the unbounded licentiousness of the ecclesiastics, monks, and nuns, whose debauchery, lewdness, avarice, and even crimes of the blackest dye, such as robbery and murder, are painted in the most horrible colours*. Amid this universal depravity of all ranks, and all ages, the female sex could not possibly remain uncontaminated; and accordingly, the Carlovingian laws attest, that there was scarcely any carnal crime committed by the Romans, which was not also practised by the Franks.

This general corruption of morals encreased during the succeeding ages, in

* *Stewart, p.* 121, &c.

equal proportion with the anarchy of the European states, with the ascendancy of a lawless nobility, and of a still more dissolute and powerful clergy, and with the oppression and misery of the common people. It was still farther augmented by the unbridled licentiousness of the crusaders, by the acquaintance which they contracted with the vices of the Greeks and Orientals, and even by the rapidly advancing opulence of the great cities of Italy, Germany, and other countries of Europe. As the despots of the East keep multitudes of dancing-girls, so the sovereigns of the West maintained great numbers of courtezans, who were under the superintendence of particular officers. They accompanied the kings and princes in their campaigns, and the camp of a French monarch once contained fifteen hundred persons of this description, whose dress and ornaments were of immense value, and who, exhibiting an appearance not less splendid than the first ladies of the court, mingled on public solemnities among the latter, and once caused the queen to give the kiss of peace to one of their number, whom she took for a lady of high rank*.

* *St. Palaye, II. p.* 66, 67.

In cities, debauchery advanced with as rapid strides as in courts. Prostitutes formed, as in the East, a particular class, who enjoyed the protection of government, paid distinct taxes, and could proceed at law against such females as followed the profession without having been admitted to the freedom of the sisterhood. Even the first magistrates of London and other cities kept public brothels, and the frequenting of them was considered as so far from disgraceful, that creditors were compelled by law to allow their debtors, whom they had confined, a certain sum twice a week, exclusive of the expences of their maintenance for the purchase of venereal gratification*. On all festival occasions both public and private, both civil and religious, prevailed an unbounded and more than Oriental shamelessness. At the Feast of Fools, as it was called, which was held in the Christmas holidays throughout all Europe, from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, not only dissolute and licentious laymen, but even ecclesiastics, danced naked in the streets and in the churches, during the most blasphemous mockery and prophanation of the most sacred acts. At the entry of Louis XI. in the year 1461, the inhabitants of Paris

* See the *Mémoire sur la Fête des Fous. Vol. I.*

selected the most beautiful damsels of their city who sung, quite naked, in the character of Syrens, all kinds of pastoral compositions for the amusement of the king*. On the arrival of the Princess Anne of Bretagne, says the same writer from whom the preceding fact is taken, they carried their attention to such a length as to station persons at proper intervals with certain chamber utensils, for the purpose of running to the aid of such of the queen's ladies as might chance to be overtaken by any pressing necessity. It was even customary to dance naked at weddings, and it was regarded as a venial ebullition of pleasantry to strip young females entirely of their clothes. The balls and festivities with which tournaments were accompanied and concluded, were, in general, as devoid of all regard to decency as the weddings of the citizens. Amid the intoxication of impetuous passions, inflamed by wine, there was nothing that the knights would not demand at the courts and banquets of the kings, and nothing that females of the highest rank were not prepared to grant. Hence it was no uncommon thing for the husbands to depart from these festivities with a new ornament on their brows, and most of the unmarried females with the

* *St. Foix, I. p.* 133.

loss of their honour*. Notwithstanding the young knights, on their reception into the orders of chivalry, were obliged to swear to pay courtesy and respect to the fair sex; notwithstanding they ran the risk of being excluded with the utmost disgrace from the tournaments, on account of injuries or affronts offered to females; notwithstanding they treated the ladies with the most flattering marks of honour at all public festivals and exercises of chivalry, and manifested the enthusiasm of a more than terrestrial passion; I say, notwithstanding all this, throughout the whole of the middle ages, and even in the times of chivalry nothing was more common than the persecution and ravishment of widows and orphans, than incest, adultery, or the illicit cohabitation of persons not legally married, and even than polygamy; for all the knights regarded not only the maids and attendants of their wives, but also the females who worked under the inspection of the latter, as the inmates of their harem†. The universality of con-

* *St. Palaye, II. p. 68.*

† *Adam Brem. IV. p. 20. Fischer über die Probenächte der Teutschen Mädchen, p. 17, 25, 38, 60. Meiners Abhandlung über die Brautpreise. Grupen in his Uxor Tiicotica*, on the *Geneccia* of the Nobles of the middle

cubinage among all, and even the higher ranks, entirely did away the disgrace formerly attached to illegitimate birth. The natural sons of princes and nobles styled and subscribed themselves *batards*, and to these illegitimate children were granted, in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, such privileges as they had never before enjoyed among the uncorrupted Teutonic nations*. I need scarcely mention the immorality of the superior as well as inferior clergy, since it is generally known, that they were not only more addicted to the excesses of intemperance and uncleanness than laymen, but even publicly indulged the most odious and unnatural lusts; and that among the ecclesiastics there were perhaps as many robbers, murderers, and wretches who merited death for their crimes, as among the most depraved of the temporal classes of the community†.

ages, *p.* 32. In 1454, a Count d'Armagnac publicly married his own sister. *St. Foix, V. p.* 130.

* *Grupen Uxor Theotisca, p.* 257, 289.

† *De Guignes* in *Vol. XXXIII* of the *Mémoires de l'Academie des Inscript. p.* 495. *Marin Vie de Saladin, I. p.* 412. *Henri Etienne Apol. pour Herodote, I. p.* 223, 282, 480, &c. *Möhsens Geschichte der Wissenschaften, I. p.* 127, 340. Perhaps all my readers may not know, that the children of priests were called *sons of w----es*, that ecclesiastics publicly invited their neighbours as sponsors, and that bishops paid the customary dues for their children.

This being the state of morals, the knights could not possibly entertain such a genuine affection and regard for their wives, nor could the latter deserve the same attachment and esteem, as our remote ancestors and their wives in the ages of simplicity and innocence. Nevertheless, exterior respect for the fair sex, as well as the affectation of piety and valor, increased with every generation till towards the conclusion of the fourteenth, and even after the commencement of the fifteenth century. The universal emulation excited among the nobility by the institution of chivalry and tournaments, to surpass their predecessors and rivals in heroic deeds and the fulfilment of the duties of knights, combined with the inactive leisure and the want of intellectual cultivation, impelled the knights on almost every occasion beyond the bounds of nature and of reason, imparted to all their passions the character of unnatural enthusiasm, and to most of their actions an air of ludicrous solemnity. Instead of honouring the true God, by acquiring correct notions of his works and of his blessings, and by leading

The clergy, therefore, exerted all their influence in favour of the extension of the rights of bastards.

an irreproachable and useful life, they imposed upon themselves fasting, castigations, and other penances with the rigour of anchorets; attended upon the wounded and the sick; founded convents and churches; went into cloisters, where they doomed themselves to the performance of the lowest offices, such as those of scullions, swine-herds, and the like; and at length, when at the point of death, directed their bodies to be enveloped in the garb of some spiritual order, and thus interred, as a protection on the way to heaven against all the attacks and artifices of Satan. The generosity of the knights was commonly as mistaken and perverted, and at the same time not less extravagant than their piety. They rifled churches and convents, robbed widows and orphans, plundered merchants and travellers, fleeced their wretched vassals, and then squandered the treasures accumulated by such injustice in splendid tournaments and feasts, at which their pretended liberality was often as ludicrous and eccentric as their piety, their love, and valour. At a tournament held at Beaucaire in the year 1174, a Count of Toulouse made a present of one hundred thousand pieces of gold or silver to one single knight, who immediately divided

the sum among one hundred of his companions in arms. Bertrand Raibaux had a field, in which a tournament was to be held, ploughed with twelve yoke of oxen, and sown with twenty thousand pieces of silver—a folly which was probably not rare, since the French language still retains the expression: *semer de l'argent*—to sow money. One Guillaume Gros de Marteilo, who had a retinue of four hundred knights and esquires, suffered no other dishes to be brought to his table but such as had been cooked with wax-lights and wax-torches. Another gentleman, Ramnons de Venans, thought to display his magnificence by ordering thirty of his finest horses to be burned before the eyes of the whole assembly*.

The manner in which the knights displayed their valour and courtesy is better known from the imitations and parodies of the romances of chivalry, than the real nature of their other virtues. The knights of the middle ages much more rarely employed their extraordinary strength, courage, and experience in arms, in the defence of their country, than in the oppression of their inferiors, the invasion of

* *St. Palaye, II. p.* 77, 78.

their equals, rebellion against their princes and kings, or finally, in adventures equally ludicrous and bloody; so that while we admire their intrepidity, we cannot forbear deploring or laughing at their actions. The knights did not evince their love and esteem for the sex by fidelity to their wives, by a careful education of their daughters, and by respect for the virtue of the wives and daughters of others; but merely by empty ostentation, which corrupted females instead of honouring them, and which, in its most ridiculous extravagance, was as devoid of real love and regard, as their exterior piety was destitute of true devotion, and their profusion of genuine liberality. They paid adoration, from custom, to females whom they debauched and despised, and out of vanity engaged in mortal combat for the honour of ladies whom they knew to be without honour. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that, in every country, and in every age, there were knights who, like the Constable du Guesclin, the Marshal de Boucicaut, and the Chevalier Bayard, conscientiously fulfilled all the vows which they made on their reception into the order, and who were, at the same time, living patterns of all the other virtues befitting knights. Nor is

it less true, that at every period there existed ladies of extraordinary merit, who endeavoured to render themselves worthy of the esteem of such knights; but we should be egregiously mistaken, were we to form a judgment from these models of the majority of knights and ladies, or of the predominating manners of both sexes during the age of chivalry. The admirers of chivalry, and the panegyrists of the middle ages, might have inferred, from the constitution of human nature and the analogy of history, that, when the sensual appetites and the impetuous and selfish passions of arrogant barbarians were neither attempered by education and instruction, nor restrained by the dread of punishment, but on the contrary, were strengthened and inflamed by impunity, example, and religion—that, in this case, I say, the vows and oaths that were taken by the knights, on their entrance into the orders of chivalry, were far too weak to keep within bounds the desires and passions of powerful and lawless men, and that words alone, especially in rude and corrupt times, cannot supply the place of education, instruction, good examples, wise laws and punishments, and a pure religion, favourable to the cause of truth and virtue.

The knights of the middle ages admitted ladies to all public transactions and diversions; but this was nothing more than what our remote ancestors had done before them, and for this reason, because they regarded their wives and mistresses as the most proper witnesses of their valour, and the best counsellors in danger and distress. On the origin of chivalry and tournaments, the prerogatives of the sex and the duties of knights were determined by laws and vows; and from that period the latter began to affect virtues which they never possessed, and a regard which they never felt, but which had formerly been the natural reward of female virtue and merit. Outward respect was paid to women, not out of esteem, but because fashion imposed it as a duty, and neglect of this exterior deference was attended with disgraceful punishments.

It may be presumed, with certainty, that the courageous females who carried refreshments to the ancient Germans in the midst of an engagement, who sucked and dressed their wounds, assisted their husbands in putting on their armor before they went out to battle, and in taking it off again after their return. Hence probably arose the custom of the middle ages,

that young knights, after their solemn reception into the orders of chivalry, had their armor taken off by ladies of distinction, and that valiant warriors before they engaged in mortal combat, were accoutred by the fair hands of females. When the ceremonies of the installation of the knights in the church were ended, the new members of the order were conducted, in complete armor, to the palace of the king or prince in whose capital the solemnity was held, and first into the apartment of the queen or princess, in which all the ladies of the court and country were assembled. Here the fairest of their number took off one portion of the armor of the new knights after the other, and invested them with the robes of state embroidered with the arms of each, and lined and bordered with ermine or other fur, according to their rank and quality. It was not less common for the most illustrious ladies of the court, but especially the mistresses of valiant knights, to put on their armor when they were going out to fight, either in behalf of the faith, the honour of the nation, or the glory of their prince and of the fair*.

* *Colombière*, I. 18, 19.

One of the principal vows made by the knights on their installation was, that they would not wound the honour of the sex either in word or deed. If any one violated this vow, he was punished, according to the laws of tournaments, in the severest and most disgraceful manner. Previous to every tournament, the ladies accompanied by the kings of the tournament, or umpires, inspected the arms and helmets of the princes and gentlemen who intended to exhibit proofs of their strength and valor. At this solemn investigation, every injured female was at liberty to point out the arms of an offender, and thereby subject him to a rigid and awful examination*. If the complaints of the ladies proved well founded, the other knights and esquires fell upon the culprit, and inflicted a severe discipline upon his shoulders, till he begged pardon of the ladies with a loud voice, and promised never to commit a like offence in future†. Notwithstanding this rigorous

* See the Laws of Tournaments enacted by King Philip de Valois, in *Colombiére*, *I.* 33, and those of René d'Anjou, King of Sicily, *Ibid. p.* 64, 65; with which the German laws for the same occasions perfectly corresponded.

† The ordinance of René d'Anjou is expressed in these terms: "Lors en ce cas doit être si bien battu le medisant

punishment, it must be obvious to every one, that no genuine respect for the sex could be inspired by this expedient.

The ladies were not only the co-umpires at tournaments, but they chose a *Chevalier des Dames*, or ladies' knight, whose duty it was to take under his protection such combatants as transgressed the laws of the tournament, and were too unmercifully beaten by their brother-knights*. The umpires selected from among the ladies who were present, the two most distinguished for beauty and rank, and conducted them, preceded by torches, and by heralds and esquires, several times round the great hall in which the knights were assembled. At length they stopped before the knight or esquire whom they chose, by the advice of the umpire, for their chevalier, on which the king at arms announced the will of the ladies to the fortunate object of their choice, at the same time delivering to him a veil magnificenly embroidered and decorated with gold fringe, which he was to bind on the day of the

que ses espaules s'en sentent bien, et si longuement qu'il crie mercy aux dames à haute voix, tellement que chacun l'oye, en promettant que jamais ne lui advindra d'en medire ou villainement parler." *Colomb.* as above.

* *Colombière, I. p.* 65, 67.

tournament to the end of a lance. No sooner did the chevalier, according to the direction of his mistresses, incline this sacred lance towards a combatant who had subjected himself to the discipline inflicted on transgressors, than his persecutors were obliged to quit their victim, whose person became inviolable through the protection of the ladies. The address made by the king at arms in the name of the ladies to their chevalier on his election to that office, and his reply, were prescribed with the same accuracy, as the formularies pronounced by the heralds before the commencement, and during the continuance of the tournaments.

In the tournaments themselves, all the words and actions of the knights had some reference to the ladies, and especially to their mistresses. They styled themselves servants or slaves of love, *serviteurs où servants d'amour*, an appellation more honourable in their opinion than any other title whatever*. In this quality of slaves of love, they often suffered themselves to be led by their fair-ones with small chains or rich ribbons fastened to the head-piece of their horses, to the lists or the place

* *St. Palaye, I. p. 90.*

appointed for the contest*. In the same quality the knights wore the colour and livery of their ladies, and certain devices or emblems which were understood only by the latter; and these *devises d'Amour* are the principal cause of the single, unintelligible words, or broken sentences to be found in the arms of many noble houses†. Thus Saintré, the celebrated companion in arms of Marshal de Boucicaut, appeared at a tournament which he gave in honour of a princess of distinction, previous to his expedition to Germany, on a horse with a covering of white satin, embroidered with fleurs de lis, and the words; *ne m'oubliez mie*‡. A no less essential ornament of the knights, than the colour or mottoes of their mistresses, were certain tokens or memorials of love, which in French were called by various names, but most commonly *faveurs, joyaux*, or *emprises d'Amour*§. These love-tokens generally consisted of some portion of the dress, or some ornament belonging to the

* This was done by Marshal de Boucicaut and his colleagues at a tournament held in the year 1387. *Vie de Boucicaut, Cologne*, 1737, *p.* 32.

† *St. Palaye, I. p.* 156, 157.

‡ *Ibid. I. p.* 273.

§ *Ibid. I. p.* 91, 161. *Colomb. I. p.* 272.

ladies; either of a veil or a scarf, a ribbon, a bracelet, a feather, or something of that kind, which was affixed by the hand of the fair to a part of the armor, the weapons, or the body of the knights. On Saintré's departure for Germany, his illustrious mistress with her own hand bound round the knight's right arm a gold bracelet, enriched with two diamonds, six rubies, and the same number of pearls, after which, she kissed her lover, and said to him: "My friend, and my only desire, I pray to God and the Blessed Virgin that I may fasten this favour at such a time, and in such a place, that you may return crowned with honour; and, in this case, I vow to them to wear no linen on my body for as many Fridays or Saturdays as you are absent*." Colombiére very judiciously remarks, that the knights regarded

* The address of the illustrious mistress of Saintré, and the answers of the knight, have something so frank, so natural, and so interesting in the origin, that I think it may not be amiss to subjoin them: "Et en le baisant lui dit, mon amy et mon vrai desir, je prie à Dieu et à notre dame, que en telle heure et en tel point le vous puisse-je mettre, que à tout honneur en puissiez revenir, et se ainsi est, je leur voue que touts les Vendredis je ne porterai linge sur ma chair nue, par autant de Vendredis où de Samedis, que serez dehors. Ha! madame, dit-il, et que vous ai je merité; qu'une telle dame fasse tels vœx pour moy. Oui mon amy, dit-elle, car vous estes tel, que je vueil."

these love-tokens presented by their mistresses, not only as memorials of the favour of the ladies, or as a stimulus to great achievements, but as sacred talismans, by which new courage and strength were communicated, and all impending disasters were averted.

These love-tokens, whether they were affixed to the helmet, or to the lance, to the shield, or to the arm of the knight, were often lost in the heat of combat. In this case the ladies did not fail to send their admirers other *faveurs* or *emprises d'amour*, that they might never be without the safeguard of the tutelary spirit residing in these love-tokens. On some occasions the knights were so often reduced to this dilemma, and the ladies were so ready to relieve them, that amidst the tumult of the conflict, and the ardor of their love, they totally forgot themselves and the situation in which they were placed. At a tournament described by Perceforest, the ladies sent the combatants so many new tokens taken from their hair, or the garniture of their dress, or the coverings of their bosoms, that at length they had stripped themselves of all their ornaments, and appeared half undressed. Those who first discovered

the condition to which they had reduced themselves, where overwhelmed with shame, but when they perceived that all their companions had made the same sacrifice in behalf of the friends of their hearts, the whole assembly could not forbear bursting into a loud laugh*. So late as the first half of the seventeenth century, it was customary in France for ladies to give their lovers such-like pledges of their affection, and for the latter to wear them in public†.

In order to evince their entire devotion to the mistresses of their hearts, the knights demanded of their ladies before tournaments, as they did of their kings and princes previous to a battle, a watch-word which they might repeat during the combat, for the purpose of reviving their spirits, and proving, that in the most imminent dangers they never suffered their thoughts to be diverted from their ladies‡. When the tournament was finished, they commonly broke another lance which was called *le coup*, or *lance des dames*§, and in the same manner the combat was re-

* *St. Palaye, I. p.* 162.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Ibid. I. p.* 156, 157.
§ *Ibid. I. p.* 97.

newed, when they came to the battle-axe, the sword, and the dagger. When all the combats were entirely finished, the umpires commonly adjudged the prizes of valor to those who had signalized themselves the most. Very often, however, the ladies were the only judges of the bravery of the knights, or were at least consulted respecting the adjudication of the prizes; but when this was not the case, and the umpires did not crown the knights whom the ladies thought entitled to the prize, the latter bestowed a second prize, on which as high, or a still higher value was set than upon the former*. The prizes consisted either of gold chains, or rings, and other jewels composed of precious stones, and they were given by the princes or gentlemen by whom the tournament was held; but in Germany, as it appears, not rarely by the most distinguished ladies who were present on the occasion. At a tournament which Florenz, Count of Holland, is reported to have held at Cologne, his countess promised the three knights who should excel all their rivals in the combats of chivalry, three jewels or prizes, one valued at

* *St Palaye, I. p.* 98.

three hundred, another at two hundred, and the third at one hundred guilders*. At another tournament held by the knights on the banks of the Rhine, at Worms†, four ladies of distinction brought the same number of prizes of very different value, for such of the combatants as should most signalize themselves. The first, a wreath with twelve gold rings, worth twelve hundred guilders, was delivered by a Countess of Montferrat to a Duke of Bohemia; the second, valued at four hundred guilders, Rupert, Count of Carinthia, received from the hand of a princess of Lorraine. The third, worth two hundred guilders was presented by a young Countess of Cleves, to a lord of Limpurg, and the fourth, of one hundred and fifty guilders was given by a Countess of Bitsch to the Chevalier Henry von Nussberg. Tournaments and other public combats were often held, under this condition, that the vanquished should pay their conquerors great forfeits, which almost always consisted of valuable jewels, and were distributed by the victors among the ladies‡. If, however, the ladies

* *Turnierbuch*, p. 91.
† *Ibid.* p. 107.
‡ *Colombière*, I. p. 103, 278.

neither proposed prizes, nor adjudged them, still they possessed the exclusive right of delivering to the conquerors such as were offered. For this honourable office the ladies of the highest rank and greatest beauty were selected; and the happy mortals to whom the prizes were decreed, enjoyed the enviable privilege of giving a respectful kiss to the fair females by whom they were crowned*.

When the knights had received the pledge of their valor, or of their glory, they were conducted amid the acclamations of the people, the applauses of the umpires and heralds, the cheerful sounds of various kinds of music, surrounded by the ladies who had crowned them, and attended by all the princes and knights, into the palace of the prince in whose territory, or of the gentleman at whose expence the tournament had been held. Here the ladies took off the armor of the conquerors, and invested them with magnificent robes; and when they had refreshed themselves a little, they were conducted by the ladies into the dinner-hall, where the most honourable places were assigned them. It was not uncommon for ladies to regard it

* *Colombiére, I. p. 99.*

as an honour to wait at table on valiant knights*, from whom at other times they received the respect due to independent princesses. When these marks of distinction were paid to young knights, and they were obliged to sit between the king or prince and his consort, exposed to the gaze of the whole court, they were most grievously oppressed by the weight of honours to which they were unaccustomed, and thrown into the utmost embarrassment, accompanied with all the signs of bashfulness and timidity. But when the same honour was conferred on knights to whom it was no novelty, they were nevertheless obliged by the laws of chivalry to preserve the utmost modesty of demeanor, ascribing the glory they had acquired rather to good fortune than to their own superior merits. On these occasions likewise, all the speeches, motions, and actions with which every token of honour was received, seem to have been prescribed by particular formularies†.

The spirit of the middle ages, and the sentiments of the knights are more clearly displayed in the achievements and adven-

* *St. Palaye, I. p.* 101.
† *Ibid.*

tures of the knight-errants, in the orders founded for the protection of the fair sex, and in the tribunals in which disputes of love were decided, than in the institution of tournaments. Each of those peculiar characteristics of the ages of chivalry is therefore worthy of a brief notice.

Knight-errants were coeval with chivalry itself, but they were of different kinds, according to the different objects which they had in view. In a certain sense, all knights were knight-errants; for this appellation was given indiscriminately to all those who quitted their native country, not merely on fortuitous adventures, but in pursuit of some determinate object, and for the purpose of acquiring glory in war. Thus the biographer of the Marshal de Boucicaut applies the term *errer*, to all the campaigns which that valiant knight and his companions in arms made in Prussia and against the Turks; and during which Boucicaut and his friends even offered their services to the Turkish Sultan Amurat, but upon condition that they should not be employed against the professors of the Christain faith*. In a more limited signification of the word, those

* *Vie de Boucicaut, p.* 27.

were termed knight-errants, who formed the resolution of wandering for a certain time through every country far and near, to relieve oppressed widows, orphans, and virgins, to curb or to destroy powerful robbers and disturbers of the peace, and thus fulfil a solemn vow which all knights were obliged to take on their reception into the order. Finally, the term was applied in its principal sense, to those who, either by the command of their mistresses, or from the motive of spontaneous gratitude, or in order to render themselves more worthy of the favour of the fair, and to exalt their glory, repaired to foreign countries, where, with sword and lance, they maintained the superior virtue and beauty of their ladies against all who intimated a doubt on the subject*.

Those knight-errants, who set themselves up for the protectors of innocence, and the deliverers of the oppressed, formed an order within an order, and regarded themselves as the descendants and rivals of King Arthur's knights, or the knights of the round table†. The ancient romances

* *Colombière, I. ch.* 8. *St. Palaye, II. p.* 7, &c. 52, &c.

† *Colombière, I. p.* 135.

described the knights of the round table as valiant and philanthropic adventurers, who went about in quest of giants, and other knights that were guilty of violence and oppression, in order to exterminate these foes to virtue and innocence from the face of the earth. They mentioned the countries and castles where these giants or monsters had established their residence, and where they were overcome; and even though all these places and castles were fictions invented in the spirit of ancient chivalry, still they evince, that knight-errants were fruits of the lawless ages not less beneficial, or less natural and salutary than Hercules, Theseus, and other heroes of Grecian fable. The castles and places which, in the time of the supposed knights of the round table, were the residence of the violators of innocence, and the disturbers of the public peace, were sometimes called *la douloureuse Tour*, or, *le Chasteau tenebreux*; sometimes *le Val sans retour*, *le Val des faux amans*, or *la terre foraine*. Of the same description were *le Pont perdu*, or *le Pont sous l'Eau*, *la Salle perilleuse*, *le Pas dès Roches*, *appellé Maupas*, *le Chasteau de la douloureuse Garde*, *le Lit advantureux*, *la Forest desvoyable*, *le Chasteau du Trespas*, *le*

Palais advantureux, l'Eschignier merveilleux, la Prison aux quatre Dames, le Chasteau de la blanche Espine, le Tartre desvoyable, la Forest perilleuse, le Chasteau de l'Isle estrange, le Lit des Merveilles, la Forest gastée, la Laure miraculeuse, l'Espée brisée, &c. When the knights had taken these places of destruction, and killed their owners or inhabitants, they gave possession of them to just and benevolent knights, and changed their terrific appellations to more agreeable names. Thus, *la Tour de la douloureuse Garde,* was called *la Tour de la belle Prise ;* and the names of *Chasteau du Trespas,* and *Pont perdu* were altered to *Chasteau des Dames,* and *Pont trouvé**.

Knight-errants who wholly devoted themselves to the service of widows, orphans, and other persons in distress, enjoyed extraordinary privileges and honours†. Every one thought himself fortunate to have such a knight-errant for his guest, and to supply all his wants, without expecting the smallest recompence. In the cities there were particular inns or habitations, where they were accommo-

* *Colomb. p.* 135.
† *Ibid. p.* 129, 130.

dated in a manner suitable to their birth and merit, where they were nursed and attended if they fell sick, and at their departure were provided with every necessary. Out of the cities they considered every gentleman's castle as their property, where they were waited upon by ladies, and listened to by the knights with the greatest respect and admiration. Even convents and anchorets vied with each other in anticipating the wishes and wants, and in relieving the necessities of knight-errants. If their horses happened to lose a shoe, or some parts of their armor and accoutrements needed repair, the esquires of the knights applied to the first blacksmith they came to, and he was obliged to work for knight-errants without remuneration: for this reason, those who followed that business during the ages of chivalry were exempted from all the taxes paid by other artizans and mechanics. When knight-errants could neither find a city, a castle, nor a village, they reposed in complete armor beneath a tree in the vicinity of a brook, where themselves and their horses might allay their thirst. Their hunger they either appeased with the little store of provisions which their esquires generally carried with them, or if this was

exhausted, their attendants, who had bows and arrows for the purpose, killed a rabbit, or some other small animal, which they skinned, sprinkled with pepper and salt, and frequently ate raw, without farther preparation. This raw rabbit's flesh was called *du chevreuil de presse*, and hence in the ancient romances of chivalry we often meet with the expression *chevreaux de presse nourriture des Heraux**. In lonely places they generally made tables of flat stones, on which the knight-errants and esquires took their moderate repast. Amid the hospitality universally experienced by the knight-errants, they had little or no occasion for money; but they commonly carried with them some valuable jewels or pieces of gold, for the purpose of procuring better armor, weapons, and apparel, than what they usually wore, when they wanted them for a tournament or any other festive occasion. The knight-errants were, however, not always the characters which they gave themselves out to be. Instead of restraining depredation and oppression, they frequently practised both, and were at least in later times, robbers and disturbers of

* *Colombiére*, and *St. Palaye*, *II. p.* 54.

the public peace, or the associates and assistants of such like offenders.

The amorous knight-errants resembled the class which has just been described in this point, that they generally wandered about without any determinate object for their peregrinations, though some of them, like Saintré fixed upon a certain court, at which they resolved to display their valor, and to demonstrate the beauty and virtue of their ladies*. In another particular also, these amorous knight-errants probably experienced a similar fortune with those who made a profession of relieving the distressed; I mean, they were often obliged to be content with wild rabbit's flesh and a bed of turf beneath the canopy of heaven. For the rest, they were not in general so poor, nor did they so frequently avail themselves of the privileges of the other class; they not only went in pursuit of the unjust and rapacious, but sought out valiant knights, who were ready to risk as much as themselves, for their own reputation and the honour of their goddesses. All the amorous knight-errants wore green armor, weapons, and apparel, to denote the verdure

* *Colomb. I. p.* 278.

of their youth, and the flower of their strength*. Their expeditions were commonly undertaken for the accomplishment of certain vows, which, in moments of amorous intoxication they had spontaneously made, or their adored mistresses had required of them. A gentleman of Mantua, named Galeazzi, whom queen Joanna of Naples had chosen for her partner at a dance, was so deeply impressed with the distinction conferred on him by that fair, but notorious princess, that he promised to travel in France, Burgundy, England, Spain, Germany, and other countries, till he had vanquished two knights to present to her as her slaves. This vow he actually accomplished, and brought two knights to the queen, who most generously set them at liberty†. It was not uncommon for knights who held inferior tournaments, known by the appellation of *pas d'armes*, to impose this condition, that the vanquished should present themselves as prisoners to the ladies of the conquerors, or give a diamond of great value as a ransom‡. Brantome relates§, that a con-

* *St. Palaye, II. p.* 8.
† *Ibid. II. p.* 53. *Brantome sur les ducls, p.* 26.
‡ *Colombière, I. p.* 271.
§ *Dames illust. p.* 375.

quered knight whom the victor had delivered with his horse and arms to the canons of the church of St. Peter at Rome, was kept a prisoner during the remainder of his life, probably because he had not the means of paying the large ransom demanded by the avaricious ecclesiastics.

At the time of Saintré, a celebrated foreign knight, a Pole, as he is called, but who was probably a German, visited Paris. He made a vow to wear two gold rings, to which were fastened long chains of the same metal*, above the elbow of

* The custom of young gentlemen presenting themselves to their brides, and of knights appearing before their ladies, or in honour of their ladies, with chains or ribbons fastened about their legs, probably originated in the age of tournaments and chivalry. On an ancient casket, upon which is a representation of the nuptials of the beautiful prince Henricus Palatinus, a son of Henry the Lion, with the Countess Palatine Agnes, in 1195, the bridegroom appears with two ribbons, embroidered with pearls, attached to his legs. *Grupens Uxor Theotisca*, Introduction, *p.* 54, 55. The mothers of the illustrious pair projected and accomplished this union without the knowledge of their consorts. The mother of the princess, therefore, informed her husband, who was returning from a journey, of the nuptials of her daughter with the son of Henry the Lion, in an allegory which certainly cannot be read without interest by every one that feels any respect for the illustrious house from which the bridegroom was descended. "I have caught a falcon," says she, "which came flying over the fields, and you never beheld a finer in all the days of your life. His head is brown, his throat white, his pinions long, shewing that

the right arm, and above the ancle of one leg, in honour of his mistress for five years, unless he were vanquished by some valiant knight before the expiration of that period. In order to try whether he should be released from his vow in France, he caused a proclamation to be made at Paris by Brunsvich, his herald at arms, challenging any knight who might be disposed to fight him, and announcing his intention to stake three jewels, a diamond, a ruby, and a sapphire, each worth three hundred crowns, against three prizes of equal value, which should belong to the conqueror in the three principal kinds of combat. Saintré was encouraged by his lady to accept the stranger's challenge,

his father begot him on a lofty branch, and his talons and beak finely curved and hooked for seizing his prey."

Ek hebbe eynen Valken uterwelt
der quam her geflogen over velt,
Gefangen und behalten
dat des Got im ute walden
Eynen also gy over gy gesagen
bi alle juwen dagen
Sin hovet brun, sine kele blank
to ome stan alle mine Gedank.
Seine Zass-Federn ime so lang
zu urkund ziehet herab
das ine sein vater hab uf hoher ast gezogen
wol zur kore sein gebogen
ime seine Klahen und sein Schnabel.

and he was fortunate enough to vanquish him in each of the three species of combat, both on horseback and on foot*.

One of the most difficult and dangerous vows which any knight ever made, or lady ever required, was that imposed on a French knight by his young and beautiful mistress†. She promised her suitor to resign herself to him with heart and hand, and to place her fortune at his disposal, if he would bring her the portraits of thirty fair ladies whose admirers he had vanquished out of love to her. The knight accepted the offer, and sallied forth to accomplish the wishes of his goddess, with her portrait painted on his shield. Whenever he met a knight who refused to acknowledge that the lady of the adventurer was fairer than his own, he challenged him to fight, and after vanquishing his antagonist, compelled him to suffer the portrait of his fair-one and her name to be painted and inscribed upon his shield, under that of his own mistress. The historian, whose authority was followed by Colombiére, affirmed, that in less than a year he returned with thirty portraits of the mistresses of conquered knights.

* *Colombiére, I.* p. 277.
† *Ibid. p.* 19.

When one knight challenged another for the love of his lady*, and to fulfil his vow†, it was done with every testimony of politeness and regard. In the cartel or challenge which a knight sent to his antagonist, he prayed God to grant him honour, joy, and the accomplishment of all his wishes with respect to his lady, to whom the challenger also intreated his opponent to commend him. When the party so challenged failed to appear at the place and time appointed, the challenger enquired with great civility, whether he was in disgrace with his lady, or exiled from the court of Cupid, for otherwise he could not comprehend why so valiant a knight should have changed his resolution and declined the combat‡.

Not less frequent than the expeditions and combats of knight-errants for the love of their ladies, or the conflicts of knights belonging to belligerent nations for the glory of their country and arms, were the duels which took place between the warriors of hostile armies for the love of the

* "*Pour l'amour de sa Dame.*"

† The acceptance of a challenge to fight *pour l'amour de sa dame*, was termed *accomplir le fait d'amour*. *St. Palaye, I. p.* 286.

‡ *St. Palaye, I. p.* 256, 257.

ladies*. The challenges to these fights for the honour and love of the ladies were sometimes given amid the tumult of a battle, or the dangers attendant on the storming of towns and castles; and no sooner did the hostile armies, or the besiegers and the besieged, though animated with mutual rage, perceive preparations for such a combat, than they desisted from the work of destruction till the enamoured knights had finished their duel. These combats for the love of the ladies continued till the reign of Louis XIV; but after the age of chivalry they were never so common as under Henry the Third and Fourth. During the reigns of those monarchs there was a war called *la Guerre des Amoureux*, because it was commenced merely at the instigation of the mistresses of the heads of both parties, that the knights might have an opportunity of displaying their bravery and their love for their ladies†. About the same time every man passed for a coward who would not defend the honour of his lady to the last extremity, even though it were notorious that she was justly deemed the lewdest female in the whole court or city‡.

* *St. Palaye, I. p.* 219, &c. 270.
† *Vie d'Aubigné, p.* 79.
‡ *Brantome sur les ducls, p.* 85.

When amorous knights undertook expeditions to acquire honour for themselves and the ladies whom they adored, and by whom they were beloved, they acquainted their fair mistresses with the number of their retinue, the signification of their arms and accoutrements, and the period of their return, and received from them advice equally tender and devout, if we may judge from the counsel and instruction which the illustrious mistress of the gallant Saintré gave to her knight. Previous to his departure for his expedition to Germany*, he communicated to the lady the usual sign to repair to the place of their former assignations. The sign consisted in this, that the knight rubbed his eye with his right hand, on which the lady put a pin or a tooth-pick to her teeth, as if for the purpose of picking them. At this last interview, Saintré related how many knights and esquires, how many heralds, trumpeters, pages, servants, and horses, he intended to take with him, and then explained to his mistress the signification of the colours, devices, or figures on the apparel, weapons, and armor of himself and his attendants, and on the trappings of his

* *Colombière, I.* 273, &c.

horses. When the lady was apprized, from the narrative of the knight, that so large a retinue as he intended to take with him would be very expensive, she gave a large sum towards defraying the cost, as the king and queen had already done. She particularly enjoined him at the conclusion of every mass, after the general benediction, to direct the priest to pronounce over him the following blessing, which the Lord God with his own mouth pronounced over Moses; "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!" The same words the lady farther exhorted her knight to repeat himself previous to his engaging in any conflict, adding, that if he followed these directions, and always conducted himself like a true knight, nothing could befal him, whether victory or defeat, gain or loss, but what would redound to his honour. After she had said this, the tears flowed from her eyes in such torrents as to deprive her of the power of utterance. The enamoured knight was so deeply affected, that he said to his lady: "Illustrious and incomparable goddess, and absolute mistress of my heart, instead

of soothing my grief at parting, you have so penetrated my soul with your sorrows, that I shall now go hence and die in a foreign land. God bless you, my sole desire, my only joy, and my greatest comfort!" At these words the knight turned away, but the lady, the source of whose tears was nearly exhausted *(à qui le ruissel de ses larmes etoit presque vuide)* called him back with a profound sigh, *(par un tres merveilleux soupir)* and addressed the deeply afflicted knight in the following terms: "You know, my friend, that we women have tender and compassionate hearts in all things that relate to the objects of our dearest affection; but now I feel myself endued with new strength, and hope to God that he will conduct you back to me in safety to my inexpressible joy. Be of good cheer, then, my noble friend, my only consolation, the sole object of my thoughts, my highest treasure in life and death, be not dejected; for, on account of your love, I will be continually happy and of good courage. But dear as my life is to you, send me no information concerning yourself, but to my queen, from whom I shall hear every thing." After this discourse, says the biographer of the knight, the two lovers gave each other

kisses without number, and without measure, and each kiss was accompanied with an affecting sigh. In this state of sorrowing joy and painful pleasure (these antitheses the wits of the age of chivalry were very fond of) the knight and the lady continued till midnight. When the lovers heard the clock strike twelve, they were affrighted at the length of their interview, kissed each other for the last time, and at this parting embrace, the lady put a diamond ring of great value on the finger of the knight*.

Imitations of knight-errantry were frequently attached to the tournaments held so lately as the conclusion of the fifteenth century. On the last day of a *Pas d'Armés* held in 1493, near Pontoise, by a Chevalier de Sandricourt and his companions in arms, the knights repaired to a neighbouring wood, which they denominated la *Forest desvoyable*, in quest of adventures, and to fight with every one whom they should meet within its precincts†.

Among all the ages of chivalry, there was none in which it flourished to such a

* *Colombiére*, *I. p.* 274, 275. From the *Histoire de Saintré*, written in the same tone as the life of Boucicaut.

† *Colombiére*, *I. p.* 169.

degree, at least in France, or that produced so many celebrated knights as the fourteenth; and in this very century so great was the arrogance of the nobles, and so frequent were their acts of injustice, that scarcely a day passed but what complaints were made at court by ladies, both married and unmarried, who had been persecuted, carried off, seduced, and violated by their powerful neighbours*. Whenever the Marshal de Boucicaut, the flower of chivalry, heard these complaints, he lent all his influence to give them weight with the king. Unfortunately, two centuries later, the kings of France were still too weak to check the atrocities of their powerful nobles. The Marshal de Boucicaut, with twelve other knights, at whose head was a cousin of the king, therefore resolved to found an order for the protection of the fair sex, to which they gave the appellation of the order *de la Dame Blanche à l'Escu Verd.* This institution the members engaged themselves to support at first for the space of five years. In the letters announcing the foundation, which they circulated throughout all France, the protectors of the ladies declared their in-

* *Histoire de Messire Jean de Boucicaut*, p. 143.

tention to hasten to the aid of every fair one who called upon them for assistance, either singly or with united force. At the same time they made known to all the gentlemen, knights, and esquires of their nation, that if any of them had made or intended to make a vow to engage in a just combat, either to display his prowess or his love to his mistress, he might apply to any of the thirteen knights of the "White Lady with the Green Shield" he pleased, who would not fail to facilitate to every knight of good family and fair reputation, the accomplishment of his vow. Each of them, continued they, who is challenged to honourable fight, will endeavour within forty days to find a place, and an umpire to decide the contest. If he cannot meet with an umpire, he will inform the challenger of the circumstance, that he may fix upon a place and an umpire, and when he has made the knight acquainted with his determination, the latter will infallibly repair within thirty days to the appointed place. None of them will object to fight with sharp weapons to the last extremity, *(à toute outrance)* and even on this condition, that the vanquished shall be the prisoner of the conqueror; but both par-

ties must previously agree upon a sum for which the captive may at any time be ransomed.—The insignia of this order of knight-errants consisted of a golden shield enamelled with green, containing the figure of a white lady, and which was bound round the arm.

The follies and adventures of the maddest of the knight-errants are nothing in comparison of the ludicrous extravagancies of the tribunals or courts of love, *(cours d'amour)*, and of the societies of love; which originated in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth century, and were imitated so lately as during the seventeenth. Ignorant writers have given currency to the opinion, that the times of these courts of love were the period at which the tender passion had attained the highest degree of purity and refinement, and they have rendered the love of the good old times *(amour du bon vieux tems, amour antique,)* a proverbial expression for innocent and virtuous love; but the very institutions of the age of chivalry, which, on the faith of others, people are accustomed to regard with the highest admiration, are the most monstrous productions of the middle ages, the most striking proofs of the greatest perversion of the understanding, and no

less depravity of heart, without which they could not possibly have taken place.

As early as the twelfth century, the gallantry originating in chivalry and tournaments, or the exterior respect paid to the sex, the indolent leisure, and frequent festivities of the princes, gentlemen, and knights, but above all, the inventive imagination of the Troubadours, concurred in the institution of courts of love*. The greatest number, and the most famous of these courts of love, were held in Provence, the native country of the Troubadours. The persons who presided at them were either kings and princes, or celebrated princesses, and if one of the former officiated as president, he was entitled *Prince d'Amour*, or *Prince du Pays dans les cours d'Amour*. The courts of love had not only presidents, like other tribunals, but all the different offices belonging to the first parliaments of the nation†; which were filled by ladies and gentlemen of the highest rank. The jurisdiction of the *Cours d'Amour* was very extensive. They

* Cours d'amour, parlements d'amour, où de courtoisie et de gentilesse. See *Rolland sur les prerogatives des Dames chez les Gaulois. St. Palaye, II. p.* 15, &c. *p.* 62, &c.

† *Rolland, p.* 44.

heard and decided all disputes between lovers, enacted ordinances respecting the rights of man and wife and of lovers of both sexes, introduced new customs and abolished old ones, and particularly discussed all questions relative to the essence and the expressions of love, the excellencies and failings of the fair sex, and on the privileges, duties, and sacrifices of lovers. Writers of the fifteenth century have collected decisions of the courts of love, and celebrated lawyers of the succeeding age have with great erudition and truly ludicrous gravity commented upon them in Latin*; and from these *arréts d'amour*, or *arresta amorum*, as from the cotemporary romances of chivalry, we may perceive that the jurisprudence and the philosophy of love in the middle ages, perfectly resembled the jurisprudence, the divinity, and the philosophy of the schools, that is, that they were just as subtle and unprofitable, if not so pernicious as the latter. The corruption of morals and barbarism, or the deficiency and decrease of useful instruction and information, have ever led mankind from the paths of truth and nature into the mazy labyrinths of specu-

* *Rolland, p.* 146, &c.

lation and error. Thus the very same causes which occasioned the fruitless, frivolous, and dangerous inquiries of the ancient sophists, and later dialecticians among the Greeks, as well as the subtleties of the modern Platonists, also produced the futile researches of the scholars, no less than those of the Troubadours, knights, and courts of love of the middle ages. As little as we are justified in concluding that the Greeks in the times of the ancient sophists and the later dialecticians, or the Greeks and Romans in the times of the modern Platonists were better, more sagacious, or more enlightened, than at other periods when they did not pursue such useless speculations, so little are we authorized to infer, that the scholars, the Troubadours, and the knights of the middle ages were more intimately acquainted with Nature and the tender passion than their descendants, because they proposed more abstruse disquisitions, and made more subtle distinctions than the latter. On the contrary, we may conclude with certainty, that the more people talked of love, and the more pompously they descanted upon it, the less they were acquainted with its real nature; and St. Palaye very judiciously observes, that the lovers of the middle

ages had rather borrowed their language and subtleties from Scotus than from Plato. Accordingly, the metaphysics of the schools, and the metaphysics of love dwindled away nearly in an equal ratio with the increasing illumination and gradual amendment of manners in the sixteenth and following centuries. The academies of love, which were held even by the great Cardinal Richelieu, and during the reign of Louis XIV. in the Hotel de Longueville, at Paris, were soon deservedly subjected, like the romances of chivalry, to the lash of satire, because their investigations were as foreign to sound philosophy as the antitheses, puns, and flourishes of the romances were repugnant to genuine wit*.

About the same period, in which it is generally believed that the formal courts of love ceased to be held, that is toward the conclusion of the fourteenth century, or at least during the reign of Charles VII. who ascended the throne in 1380, arose an institution, called an amorous court *(cour amoureuse)*, which was exactly the same kind of mockery of an actual court as the

* See among others, *Rolland*, *p.* 56, 57, where we find some accounts of the last imitations of the *cours d'amour*, which cannot be read without disgust.

tribunals of love were imitations of real parliaments*. This amorous court had the same officers, great and small, as the courts of the French and other monarchs; such as marshals, treasurers, chamberlains, &c. all of whom were chosen from families of the first distinction, and also secretaries, advocates, huntsmen, and the like. Among the officers and members of this court, dedicated solely to love, were included not only ladies and gentlemen of the highest rank, but likewise doctors of divinity, canons, preachers, and ecclesiastics of the superior orders; a motley mixture, which, as a modern writer remarks, evinces the corruption of a rude age, that did not even understand the easy art of being vicious with a certain degree of decorum.

At these courts and tribunals of love, the only subjects of discussion were the torments and extacies of love, and the only subjects of eulogy were the virtues, endowments, and amiable qualities of the fair. Each had an absolute mistress of his heart, and of his thoughts, *(dame souveraine de leurs pensées)*; and though he had perhaps never seen, but only heard of this charmer, he extolled her in the most enthusiastic

* *Rolland, p.* 47, 162, &c.

and extravagant strains*. To her he devoted his heart and his services, to her he vowed and swore everlasting fidelity, to her he complained of his intolerable sufferings, and communicated his respectful wishes. None required more than heart and mouth, terms borrowed from the formalities customary at the investiture of fiefs, and each accounted it an honour to hold his existence as a tenure dependent on the favour of his mistress. These affected expressions of admiration and passion were accompanied with incessant bowing, kneeling, and even prostration, which were equally ludicrous and troublesome, and just as insincere as their verbal protestations. All this ceremony and parade, however, could neither repress nor alter the disposition of the knights and ladies. Amid their adorations, the knights indulged in the most indecent allusions and jests, and the poems or narrations of the Troubadours and minstrels, were full of obscenities, at which Ovid or other erotic poets of more corrupt, but more refined nations, would have blushed. In these same obscene compositions the greatest indecencies were blended with the most

* *St. Palaye*, as above.

pious effusions, in the same manner as the sentiments of the knights very frequently combined excessive bigotry with extreme licentiousness both in thought and deed. I have already observed, that the lives of the knights were at least as impure as their compositions and those of their Troubadours; and in this opinion the reader will be the more confirmed when he is informed, that it was almost an essential point in the hospitality of knights, that either they or their consorts provided for a friend or stranger of distinction a handsome girl for a bed-fellow to amuse him during the night*. Let us not then, may we justly exclaim with St. Palaye, trust the praises which one age bestows, and is in the habit bestowing on another.

The constant, pure, and tender love of ancient times has ever been held up by the moralists of every age as a pattern to their contemporaries; and as Marot deplored the extinction of the love of the good old

* *St. Palaye*, as above. See also, *Vol. II. p.* 69. For this reason it was one of the most common vows of knights not to sleep with a pretty girl till they had accomplished this or the other object. It was likewise a regular practice with the knights to take with them one or more handsome females in their hunting excursions, that they might convert any thicket they pleased into a Paphian grove, and sacrifice whenever it suited them to the goddess of love.

times, so did the poets who lived two or three centuries before him*. Hugues Brunet, one of the first Troubadours, lamented that the lovers of his age, to the equal detriment of good morals and their own happiness, demanded, at the very commencement of love, the highest rewards of their passion, and prodigally lavished in one day, or in a few days the joys of love, which in the good old times had satisfied the most ardent lovers for three months together. "I have myself seen those times," says the poet, "in which a ribbon, a ring, a glove, was a sufficient remuneration for all the proofs of attachment and respect which a lover had given for a whole year to his goddess. Now-a-days lovers give up every thing for lost if they do not immediately obtain the ultimate object of their desires. In those happy times, which are now no more, they preferred a state of hope to the possession of the highest happiness, and why? Because the lover, too early gratified, would too quickly have lost the pleasing thorns of desire by which he was impelled. Why? Once more I repeat it, because the highest favors which pure and chaste love long reserves in store, are a thousand times sweeter than those which impure love so

* *St. Palaye, II. p. 21, 70.*

profusely squanders."—If Brunet and other poets of the early times of the Troubadours had not bestowed the same partial praises on the days of their youth, as the writers of every age are accustomed to lavish on the morals of the preceding, still it must be inferred that the knights and ladies either were, or endeavoured to be, what in the sequel they only wished to have the appearance of being; but that the times, in which the ladies were chaste and the knights constant and virtuous, passed away with the same rapidity as the dawn of science in the age of Charlemagne; that, finally, the early period of chivalry was regarded in succeeding centuries, as the golden times of the middle ages, which, are imagined by each generation to have ceased only in that which preceded it.

If then, with the follies of the knight-errants, and the absurdities of the courts and tribunals of love, we unite the ludicrous extravagancies of the amorous orders and fraternities, we shall obtain a tolerably correct idea of the spirit and of the love of ancient chivalry. One of these amorous fraternities was instituted in the time of the chevalier de la Tour, who has described it by the names of *Galois* and *Ga-*

*loises**. The knights, esquires, and ladies belonging to this order, made love their Deity, and actually moulded the duties and service of love into a religious worship. They sought opportunities of giving each other proofs of their zeal for the divinity whom they adored, and particularly to surpass one another in the fortitude with which they endured the inconveniencies of the weather, and of the seasons. The members of both sexes conducted themselves in summer as though it had been winter, and *vice versa*. In summer, these fanatics wore the warmest clothing, and the thickest furs, and still farther augmented the heat by keeping prodigious fires. In winter, on the contrary, they dressed themselves in the thinnest garments, slept under the lightest coverings, decorated their fire-places with evergreens and flowers, when they could procure them, and looked upon it as a disgrace to keep a fire, or to warm themselves at one in the most intense cold. When a member of this fraternity visited a married female belonging to the order, her husband immediately retired, and did not return home till the stranger had quitted his house.

* *St. Palaye, II. p. 62, 63.*

Hence arose a community of wives, a practice adopted by other fanatical sects at different periods. This fraternity of the *Galois* and *Galoises* continued, as the historian informs us, till most of the members of the order perished with cold; and the good knight entertains no doubt, that the gentlemen and ladies who died in the performance of the duties of their order, were really and virtually martyrs to love.'

CHAPTER VII.

Of the State of the Female Sex among the Greeks.

THOUGH there was an extraordinary coincidence between the other nations of Celtic origin in their habitations, food, and dress; in their conduct towards their women, children, servants, and captives; in their laws respecting marriage, property, and succession; in their feudal constitution, tournaments, and single combats, from the most ancient times till the end of the middle ages; yet the Greeks and Romans differed—and the former still more than the latter—in all these points from the most generous nations of the globe. Were we merely to regard the architecture, dress, and food of the Greeks and Romans; their treatment of women, children, domestics, and slaves; their laws relative to matrimony, property, and inheritance; their propensity to unnatural gratifications, and their love of courtezans, we might imagine, that they had the same origin with the Orientals of Asia and Africa, and the

Slavon nations of Europe. The primitive inhabitants of Greece, it is true, were Slavons, either entirely pure, or with very little intermixture; and it was not till a subsequent period that these Slavon tribes in Greece became blended with colonies of a nobler race. Had it not been for this mixture of the Pelasgi with the Hellenes, the Greeks would never have adopted the athletic excercises of the Celtic nations, or attained such a high degree of civilization: they could never have made such numerous discoveries in the arts and sciences; nor finally, could they ever have manifested such an enthusiasm for liberty, such love of their country, and other exalted virtues, or performed those glorious achievments by which they acquired immortality, and rendered themselves the benefactors of the whole human race. By the various intermixtures of the Slavonic and Celtic tribes, the nobler blood of the latter became predominant in certain regions; but nevertheless, so much of the ancient Slavonic constitution was left even in Attica itself, that its peculiar characteristics may be traced, till the latest period, in every part of the public and domestic life of the Greeks; in the relations between parents and children, husbands and

wives, masters and slaves; in all their laws, as well as in their prevailing customs and vices. To this mixed origin of the Greeks alone can it be ascribed that this celebrated people, which in certain respects so nearly resembled the most spirited and magnanimous nations of our division of the globe; in other points, and especially in its general conduct to the sex, and its laws concerning women, appeared much more closely allied to the Orientals and to the Slavonic nations of Europe.

Though later writers assure us that, at the time of Cecrops, women were admitted into the public assemblies of the people, and that this fugitive first introduced permanent marriages, and with only one wife*, it is nevertheless most clearly demonstrated by Homer and all the subsequent Greek writers of any authenticity, that no more respect was paid to the sex in ancient than in modern times, that women were not less rigidly confined; that they were bought and sold; that the females of the lower classes were forced to perform the same drudgery as in the East, and that polygamy, or rather concubinage, was universally practised without imputation.

* *Goguet, Vol. III. p. 40, and 121.*

Hence the heroes and kings of the fabulous ages had as many children as are contained in the harems of Oriental princes; for the same reason illegitimate birth was not regarded as disgraceful, and natural children enjoyed the same privileges as the offspring of the lawful wife*.

Goguet has justly observed†, that, in the sentiments of the Greeks, and in the conduct of both sexes during the heroic ages, there are many real or apparent contradictions which we scarcely know how to reconcile. Though the Greeks in those times shut up their females after the practice of the Orientals, it was nevertheless usual for guests to be dressed and undressed, to be conducted to the bath and to bed, and even to be anointed by women‡, whose attendance on these occasions bears a great resemblance to the hospitality of the knights of the middle ages, and therefore it was probably an European custom. From the seclusion of the women among the Greeks of remote antiquity, it might naturally be supposed, that they were

* See the passages of Homer quoted in *Goguet, Vol. II. p.* 130, 386. *Athenæus, XIII. p.* 1. *Plutarch, I. p.* 9, 50. *Edit. Reiskii.*

† *Goguet*, as above, and *p.* 364.

‡ *Ibid. II. p.* 386.

more jealous than the pure Celtic nations, and that they punished infidelity and adultery with much greater rigor than the latter. The Greeks of the heroic ages, however, like many depraved or barbarous polygamic nations of Asia and Africa, regarded the seduction or infidelity of their wives not as an indelible disgrace, but as an injury that might easily be repaired. They were accordingly satisfied with levying a fine upon the seducers, and the restitution of the sum they had paid at their marriage to the fathers of their brides*. The same want of delicacy which this conduct of husbands betrays, is likewise manifested in the occasion and object of the Trojan war. Agamemnon and Menelaus instigated all the monarchs and nations of Greece to accompany a cornuted and despised king in an expedition to another division of the globe, not for the purpose of avenging the forcible rape of a virtuous and universally beloved queen, but to recover an adulterous wife who was advancing in years, who had fled of her own accord with her paramour, and had lived ten years with him while her husband and his allies were en-

* *Goguet, III. p.* 130.

camped before the walls of Troy. As the history of the Celtic tribes affords no example of any such undertaking as the Trojan war, or any conduct on the part of the kings like that of Menelaus and Agamemnon, neither shall we find among the European nations of Celtic origin, even in the rudest periods of the most remote antiquity, such a want of the sense of decorum, as appears on many occasions in Homer, and which is erroneously termed simplicity of manners. Though the number of slaves of both sexes which the kings and heroes of the fabulous ages, and their wives and daughters had to wait upon them, far surpassed that of the attendants at the courts of the kings, princes, and knights of antiquity, or of the middle ages, yet the former stooped to many menial offices which the latter always deemed unworthy of their rank and birth. Heroes and the sons of princes slaughtered cattle and broiled the flesh themselves; harnessed and unharnessed horses and other animals; carried burdens from the chariots into their habitations: and princesses did not disdain the employment of washing foul linen, nor were they ashamed to be conveyed home in the same vehi-

cle with the purified garments. * The accounts which we have of the modern Slavonic nations are, it is true, extremely imperfect, but yet it must be obvious to every attentive reader, that similar examples of indecorum, and the same mixture of pomp and meanness still distinguish these people from nations possessing a more delicate organization and more refined sensibility.

I shall not here repeat the calumnies which most of the Greek poets and philosophers, and among the former Euripides in particular, and among the latter Plato, the great panegyrist of unnatural love, have advanced against the sex. † To convey a just idea of the state of the female sex, and of the sentiments of the men among the most enlightened people of Greece, we need only cite what Xenophon has noted down on this subject from the mouth of his preceptor in his Art of Economy, and what Solon left behind in his

* *Goguet, IV. p.* 366, 367.

† The sentiments of Plato respecting love and women are introduced in an essay on the unnatural propensities of the Greeks, among my miscellaneous works, and the gross calumnies of Euripides are inserted in my Rudiments of the Fine Arts, in estimating the character of that poet.

laws. A faithful delineation of the condition and rights of the female sex among the Athenians will facilitate the decision of the question, whether husbands and wives were more happy among the Greeks, and whether the latter approached nearer to the objects for which the sex was designed, than among the civilized nations of modern Europe.

During the time of the wisest of the Greeks and the most illustrious of their disciples,* the daughters of persons of distinction were not, it is true, sold like slaves, and even received a dowry from their fathers; but yet they were married, unasked, to men with whom they were not acquainted, and whom, in general, they had never seen. They were commonly married at such an early age that they were as ignorant as children how to act or how to speak.† Till the day of their nuptials, which regularly took place in their fifteenth year, or at an earlier period, girls at Athens were shut up with the greatest care, that they might see, hear, and speak, as little as possible.‡

* See *Xenophon's Oikonomikos*, c. 3, 7, 10. *Meiners Geschichte der Wissenschaften*, II. p. 72, &c.

† *Xenophon*, as above, p. 289, Thieme's edit.

‡ *Ibid.* c. 17, p. 313.

They had no other society and no other instructors but their mothers and their slaves, and the science of dress constituted the whole of their attainments. It was, therefore, regarded as something extraordinary, when girls had learned certain female arts, such as spinning, weaving, and embroidery. As the Greeks were of opinion with the Orientals, that lawful wives were not even destined for pleasure, but merely for the procreation of legitimate children, the mothers of well-bred daughters gave their children no other advice than to be chaste and faithful to their husbands. Even the consort of Ischomachus, who is held up by the latter as the pattern of a perfect housewife and of an excellent mother, being asked by her husband, soon after their marriage, whether she thought he had taken her to wife merely for the sake of pleasure, replied: that her mother had given her no other instruction than to be faithful to her husband; she, therefore, knew not how to do any thing else; but was ready to learn if he would teach her. Thus, when young females were delivered to their husbands, they were not greater strangers to the latter than to their duties and the concerns of domestic econo-

my. After the nuptials, it was some time before they were so tame as to venture to speak with their husbands, or the latter with them.* It would appear, that most of the Athenian women gave themselves as little concern about household affairs as the females of the East; for, the few who paid any attention to them were extolled as models of virtue, after their husbands had formed them, by their instruction, into good housewives. This was done by Ischomachus, the friend of Socrates; this was done also by the Athenian sage, who recommended the same method to all his disciples. He was accustomed to say, that, as a flock which is badly tended impeaches the shepherd, and an unruly or indolent horse accuses his master, so a neglectful and careless housewife reflected shame on her husband, because he had not instructed and brought her up better.† The most enlightened of the Greeks limited the duties of a good wife, housewife, and mother, to these points; ‡ that she should be faithful to her husband, that she should go abroad and expose herself

* *Xenophon*, *p.* 289, 314.

† *Ibid. p.* 289.

‡ *Ibid. p.* 290, 317, &c. *Plutarch*, VII. *p.* 1.

to the view of strangers as little as possible; that she should take care of what the husband acquired, and expend it with frugality; that she should pay maternal attention to the younger children of both sexes, and keep an incessantly watchful eye upon her grown-up daughters. "No house," says Socrates, or his friend, whom he regarded as a pattern for all fathers of families, "can subsist, in which the acquisitions of industry are not kept together and distributed with economy." Nature has, therefore, endowed the man and the woman with such qualities and faculties as will, if well employed, conduce to the attainment of both objects. The husband is incontestably adapted to those occupations which must be performed abroad. He is endued with strength and ability to endure heat and cold, the fatigues of travelling, of a military life, and the labours of the field, and courage to defend his wife, his children, and his property, from enemies and dangers. To the woman, on the other hand, Providence has denied strength, courage, and the power to bear fatigue, and has implanted in her bosom maternal tenderness towards her new-born offspring; and, by this constitution of her nature, weak and timid

woman is charged, as if by Divine command, with the superintendence of the domestic concerns. The very timidity of the female is much more advantageous for the preservation of that which the strength and industry of the man has acquired. Temperance, frugality, and presence of mind, have been dispensed to both sexes, in nearly equal portions, by the bountiful hand of Nature, because both sexes have equal occasion for these qualities; and if one or other of them be predominant or deficient in man or woman, the bonds of matrimony, by which the husband and the wife are alike united, tend to restore the equilibrium. The mistress of a family ought to resemble the queen of the bees. As she remains continually in the hive, to send out the labouring bees, to store up the materials which they bring back, and to distribute them in due time; so a good housewife should attend to the interior of her habitation, dispatch those slaves that are to work abroad, assign tasks to such as she keeps at home, and take under her care the produce of their labours. It is farther her duty to distribute what is wanted for daily use, lest as much might be wasted in a month as would suffice for the consumption of a year. It is her pro-

vince to see that the wool of the flocks is manufactured into stuffs for clothing and other purposes, and that all fruits, dry or moist, are stored away in such a manner that they may not spoil or take any injury. Finally, the mistress of a family should deposit the arms, clothing, and furniture, in the safest and most suitable apartments of the house; she should take care that they are kept clean and in good order, and that, after they have been used, they may be returned to their appointed places; she ought to pay attention to the sick slaves of both sexes, to reward the industrious, to punish the negligent and the idle, and to instruct the ignorant. If," continues Ischomachus, addressing his wife, " you add to the careful performance of all these domestic duties fidelity to me, and tenderness to your children, you may even make me your servant: you will have no occasion to fear any diminution of my love when you grow old; but, on the contrary, you may confidently expect to secure so much the more regard, the more attention you bestow jointly with me on your domestic concerns; for all the comfort and happiness of matrimony, as of human life in general, depend not upon personal attractions, which the good and

the bad may alike possess, but on virtues by which the good alone are distinguished."

Thus it appears, that from the best of the Grecian women their husbands required nothing more than that they should bear them children, and superintend the domestic economy. The public duties and private concerns of the men were all transacted abroad, or at least out of the habitations of the women, which were separated by the baths from those of their husbands and the male slaves, lest their female attendants should form too intimate a connexion with the men, without the knowledge and consent of their masters and mistresses.* In the conduct of his affairs, it never entered into the head of the husband to ask the opinion of his wife, because he knew that, in consequence of her education and continual seclusion, it was impossible she could understand any thing of the subject; and, for the same reason, the wife could never conceive the idea of intermeddling in the concerns of the husband. Wives being, therefore, totally ignorant of the affairs of their husbands, and being neither polished

* *Xenophon, I. p.* 334.

by instruction, nor by the society of men; for women of character, whether married or single, were invariably excluded from the company of the latter; their conversation could not prove interesting or instructive to persons of the other sex: men, consequently, sought only the society of men, and even Ischomachus, one of the most virtuous and upright of the Athenians, acknowledged, that there were few men, for whom he entertained a great friendship and regard, with whom he conversed so seldom or so little as with his wife.* Their total exclusion, however, from the circles, and in some measure from the presence of their husbands, did not prevent the Grecian females from painting their cheeks and other parts of their body white and red, or even from tinging their eyes with some particular colour.†

All the laws of Solon relating to the female sex evince either the Oriental spirit of the legislator, or the Oriental vices and propensities of the Athenian women. Notwithstanding the number and precision of Solon's laws respecting the education

* *Xenophon, I. p.* 313.

† *Xenophon Œcon. c. X.*

of boys, he maintains the profoundest silence with regard to that of girls; because the latter in fact received no education whatever, and because they were merely regarded as members of families, like slaves, but not as component parts of the people. Solon thought that the females of his nation were not confined with sufficient rigour; and, that their virtue might be more securely preserved by increased precaution, he, therefore, directed that women should not go abroad in the daytime, except in full dress; or by night, without torches, and in a chariot.* Solon placed no more confidence in the domestic integrity of wives, than in their conjugal fidelity. In order, therefore, to prevent embezzlement, he prohibited them to take out of the houses of their husbands eatables of the value of more than an obolus, or to carry a basket more than a cubit in length.† Among the Athenians in Solon's time, it was customary, as in all the East, for women to repair to the graves of their deceased friends, to lament their loss, to tear their faces and bosoms, and to repeat this practice at certain

* *Plut. in Solone, I. p.* 359.
† *Ibid.*

times, for a considerable period after their interment. Solon not only forbade these commonly feigned and barbarous expressions of female grief, but likewise the frequent visits paid to the graves and monuments of strange persons; because, at Athens, as throughout all the East, they furnished pretexts and opportunities for illicit intrigues. The Athenian legislator, indeed, deprived his fellow-citizens of the power they had previously possessed to sell their children and their sisters; but he allowed fathers, brothers, and guardians, this inhuman right, if their daughters, sisters, and wards, had been guilty of an indiscretion and lost their innocence.* Solon likewise endeavoured to retrench the costly provision made for females at their marriage; but this good intention was frustrated by the too-deeply rooted Oriental practice of carrying, with great parade, wearing-apparel, ornaments, and money, to the house of the bridegroom. † Dowries were not forbidden, but rather encouraged by Solon; so that, at Athens, as at Rome, there were richly portioned females and opulent heiresses,

* *Petit Leg. Attic. p.* 159.

† *Ibid. p.* 450, 451.

who, from their wealth, became mistresses over their husbands, a circumstance which frequently happens in the East. Notwithstanding their riches, however, females were always regarded, in the eye of the law, as infants or minors, and they were consequently subjected to perpetual guardianship. On the death of the father, unmarried females fell under the tutelage either of their eldest brother, or their nearest male relation, who enjoyed the same authority over their sisters and wards as their fathers had possessed. Brothers were obliged to portion their sisters, and, by Solon's laws, the nearest relatives were obliged to marry destitute orphans or to give them a dowry. * The commerce with female slaves or concubines, and also with public courtezans, was as frequent and unavoidable at Athens as in the East; and, therefore, Solon was obliged, like the Oriental legislators, to enjoin husbands, especially such as married orphans, to lie with their legitimate wives at least thrice a month,†—a law which was not more scrupulously observed at Athens than in

* *Petit. Leg. Attic. p.* 452. *Meurs. Lect. Attic. V. p.* 1. *Themis Attic. II. p.* 13.

† *Plut. in Solon. I. p.* 356.

the East. Solon did not deprive the Athenian women of the liberty of procuring divorces from their husbands, who might also repudiate their wives, on returning their dowry, or allowing them a scanty maintenance; but the legislator loaded the right he allowed them, of parting from a worthless husband with such clogs, that probably most women would rather have submitted to any hardship than have ventured to take the step prescribed by their legislator. A woman, who wished to obtain a divorce from her husband, was obliged to prefer her complaint and petition in person to the Archon,* to which the Athenian females, who were continually shut up and secluded from the society of men, must have felt an invincible repugnance, as to the most public disgrace. The seducers of wives, daughters, and sisters, if caught in the fact, might be dispatched with impunity; but the lives of the guilty females were spared. The latter, according to Solon's laws, were no longer allowed to dress like females of character, and consequently they durst not appear abroad, or at public festivals and diversions. If

* *Petit. Leg. Attic.* as above. *Meurs. Themis Attic. II. p.* 9.

they ventured to do either the one or the other, any person might attack the degraded creatures, strip them of their ornaments, tear in pieces their apparel, and even beat and abuse, but not mutilate or kill them*. In Solon's time, there must have been a great number of convenient or easy husbands at Athens, for he prohibits the keeping of adulterous wives, or the reunion with them, on pain of losing all civil honour, of being excluded from the assemblies of the people, from holding public offices, and from participating in the direction of public affairs. All these restrictions, however, like the locks, bolts, and watchmen of the *Gynaikia*, were far too weak to divert the torrent of universal corruption from the solitary abodes of the women, and to rescue such females as plunged into the stream. As early as the Peloponnesian war, women of the highest rank pointed in public at Alcibiades and other handsome youths, and were the first to seduce the innocence of these hopeful young citizens. About the period of the downfal of liberty, adultery was as common as infidelity, bribery, and treason against the state; and female honour was as

* *Meiners Geschichte der Wissenschaften, II. p.* 53.

rare as any other public or private virtue*.

As the Athenians and most of the other Greeks coincided in general with the Orientals in their estimation and treatment of women, so also they resembled them in their attachment to courtezans, and in their notions respecting connexions with those females. They were not only tolerated in Greece, but they were regarded, as in the ancient kingdoms of the East and among the modern Pagans of Hindostan, as servants of deities. The Asiatic Greeks, after the example of their neighbours, originally honoured common women as priestesses of Venus, who adored their peculiar deities, celebrated their peculiar festivals, and erected and frequented their peculiar temples. In the mother-country, courtezans seem to have first attained in the opulent and luxurious Corinth the same privileges and consequence as their Asiatic sisters. After the discomfiture of Xerxes, the Corinthians ascribed the salvation of their city and of the rest of Greece, principally to the intercession of the priestesses of Venus and the protection of that

* *Meiners Geschichte der Wissenschaften, II. p.* 606; and also, *Geschichte des Luxus der Athenienser, p.* 41.

goddess. The grateful Corinthians, therefore, had pictures painted of the pious fair to whom the country owed its preservation, that the memory of their services might be transmitted to posterity, as the Athenians painted the heroes who had fought at Marathon. At all the festivals of Venus, the people applied to the public courtezans as the most powerful intercessors with the goddess, and it was even thought meritorious to vow, in dangers or calamities, to devote a new priestess to Venus. Solon himself deemed it advantageous to his native city, to introduce at Athens the worship of the terrestrial Venus, and to invite thither public courtezans as priestesses of the divinity.

In the first generations subsequent to Solon's time, the courtezans occasioned no great mischief to the morals and the families of the Athenians, for it was long thought disgraceful to visit their habitations. In the age of Pericles, however, and still more in the succeeding generations, till the downfal of the liberty of Athens, courtezans were one of the principal causes of the early depravity of youth, and of the immorality that pervaded all ranks. When Pericles was not ashamed to receive Aspasia into his house, and the

most distinguished Athenians did not scruple to take their wives and daughters to visit her, though it was well known that she instructed young females in intrigue, and filled all Greece with these seducers of youth and destroyers of domestic happiness; men of all ranks, both married and unmarried threw themselves into the arms of courtezans, who were certainly much more interesting and accomplished than the secluded wives and daughters of the Greeks. After the age of Pericles and Socrates, the most celebrated generals, statesmen, orators, philosophers, poets, and artists lived in celibacy, keeping courtezans, who accompanied them in journies and in war. Demosthenes was not ashamed even to declare in public before the people, that men took wives to beget legitimate children, concubines in order to ensure good attendance, and courtezans for the purpose of enjoying the pleasures of love. Courtezans amassed wealth far exceeding what any Greek ever acquired by an honourable art or profession. They penetrated into the auditories of philosophers, by whose disciples they were not only tolerated but admired, and gained the reputation of elegant writers. The Greeks erected to courtezans more splen-

did monuments than to the greatest sages, or to the saviours and deliverers of their country; and at length wrote their lives and adventures, with such pains and precision as they had scarcely bestowed on the achievements and speeches of the most celebrated heroes, statesmen, and philosophers. With the decline of public prosperity, and of the arts and sciences among the Greeks, disappeared the Phrynes and the Aspasias, the objects of the desires and admiration of all Greece, and the living models of the greatest master-pieces of art; but yet the number of courtezans, their rapacity, their intemperance, their debauchery, and their extravagance continued to augment with same rapidity, as the morals and states of the Greeks sunk into corruption and decay*.

As the modern Greeks are much more ignorant, and likewise more oppressed than their forefathers under the dominion of the Romans, common women can no longer attain the reputation, I had almost said, the greatness, of the courtezans of the age of Pericles and Demosthenes: but yet the modern, like the ancient Greeks have dancing-girls or common women, and

* See the Dialogues of Courtezans in Lucian's works.

the state of the female sex in general is, with scarcely any exception, the same among the modern Greeks as it was some thousands of years ago. The Greek females are as invisible before marriage, and after it as recluse as they formerly were. In both states their apparel and ornaments are the same as those of ancient times, and their usages at weddings, lyings-in, and funerals perfectly correspond with those of antiquity*. A few deviations are, however, observable; as in the island of Metelin, the ancient Lesbos, where daughters inherit to the exclusion of their brothers†; and we are informed, that among the other Greeks the eldest daughter on her marriage has half of the father's fortune settled upon her as a dowry, though there may be ten other children to provide for‡.

* *De Guys, I. p.* 28, &c.

† *Ibid I. p.* 461.

‡ *Tournefort, I. p.* 50. Besides the above particulars many others might be adduced to prove the Oriental way of thinking of the Greeks, so widely different from that of the Celts. Among none of the nobler nations of our division of the globe was unnatural love extolled so publicly and with such enthusiasm as in Greece, and in no other country was it necessary to adopt such measures as were thought requisite by Solon for preserving the innocence of boys and youths. (See my *Geschichte der Wissenschaften, II. p.* 56, 57). Such an idea could never have entered the imagination of a Celtic legislator as that parents, brothers, and guardians could sell not only the

The Spartans differed from the Athenians and all the other Greeks, not only in their political constitution and system of education, but also in their treatment of the female sex. If the Spartans, in ancient times, conducted themselves toward their wives and daughters as the other Greeks, and did not begin before the age of Lycurgus, to allow them such extensive rights and privileges as they enjoyed from the time of that legislator till the subversion of the republic; it is impos-

chastity of their daughters, sisters, and female wards, but even that of their sons, brothers, and young male relations; and had they even conceived it possible, they would have punished such monsters in a much more exemplary manner than Solon, who attached no higher penalty to the violation of the innocence of a boy, united to the offender by the ties of blood, than the privation of civil honour. *(Ibid. p. 54)*. Among what European nations of Celtic origin, were brothers permitted, as among the Greeks, to marry their own sisters, and where else, did the violation of a virgin incur, as among the Greeks, no heavier punishment, than the necessity of marrying the injured female? *(Petit. p. 440, 446)* Among what other European nation would people of character and respectability have suffered their naked daughters to exhibit themselves as models to great artists, that from their most secret charms eminent painters might compose the figure of a goddess? Closely as the Greek women were and still are confined they have less genuine modesty than the other females of Europe. They conceal themselves from the friends of their fathers and husbands, and are not ashamed to bathe in public, as is still the practice among the women of the Orientals, and of the Slavonic nations of Europe.

sible, in my opinion, to produce, in the history of the world, a more striking example of the authority of an individual, and of the influence of the government and laws upon the spirit of a nation, than the deliverance of the Lacedæmonian fair from their ancient servitude, by Lycurgus, and the consequence to which they were elevated. But the peculiar dress, arms, and accoutrements, and the characteristic valour of the Spartans favour the supposition, that these people had a greater portion of Celtic blood in their composition than the other Greeks, and for the same reason I think it probable that the Spartan women were never so closely confined, or so lightly esteemed, as the females of the rest of Greece. Impossible as it would have been for a legislator, among the more enlightened nations of Europe. to have compelled fathers and husbands to treat their wives and daughters with such cruelty as did the ancient Greeks, excepting the Spartans, and as the modern Oriental and other Slavonic nations practise toward the sex; so impossible would it have been for Lycurgus to enforce such a mode of conduct towards women as his laws prescribe, if the sentiments of the Spartans had resembled those of the Athenians or of the

inhabitants of the East. If a legislator could have produced so sudden an alteration in notions interwoven, as it were, with their very nature, and in the lot assigned from time immemorial to the women, other legislators of Greece, besides Lycurgus, would probably have attempted the same revolution, especially as they had his example before their eyes. Solon, however, and other legislators, instead of alleviating the condition of females, confined them, like the more recent founders of religions in the East, within narrower limits than those by which they were before circumscribed. It may therefore be taken for granted, that the women of Sparta previously enjoyed the same freedom and respect as those of the Celtic nations; and that Lycurgus introduced only the unnatural regulations, which in some measure dissolved the bonds of matrimony, encouraged a community of wives, and instilled masculine dispositions into the softer sex. However contrary to the nature and destination of the sex these innovations might be, they were perfectly consonant with the constitution of the state newly organized by Lycurgus, in which all the domestic and natural relations, especially those between husband and wife, and

between parents and children were abolished, that persons of both sexes and all ages, might be united and held together by no other bond but the love of their country. The depravity of the female sex, and the contempt in which it was held in the other states of Greece, or the numerous instances of patriotism and masculine courage exhibited by the Spartan women, rendered Plato and others not only enthusiastic admirers of the laws of Lycurgus, but so dazzled their understandings, that they proposed to introduce a community of wives and a perfect equality in the education and occupations of both sexes in their imaginary states.

In Sparta*, girls, instead of being confined, practised in the public gymnasiums, like boys, all the exercises that can promote strength, health, and beauty. Many of these exercises required the competitors to strip themselves of their apparel, and at these contests of naked girls bachelors were not permitted to be present. With respect to paying and receiving visits, the Spartan females enjoyed the same liberty as the men. Their apparel

* *Xenophon de Rep. Lacedæmon. ch. i. Plutarch. in Lycurgo, I. p.* 190, &c. *Goguet, Vol. VI. p.* 426, &c.

was less cumbersome and less adapted to concealment than that of the other women of Greece; it was, in fact so contrived, that a Lacedæmonian beauty could not stir a step without shewing her leg, and that when she thought it worth her while, she might, without any extraordinary effort of coquetry, exhibit all her charms, not excepting that part of the body which the Medicean Venus covers with her left hand. The continual view of female charms was so far from producing indifference in the Spartans, that it inflamed their appetites and rendered them more addicted than the other Greeks to women, to whom they at length became entirely subject. To youths and men no incentive to great achievements was so powerful, no disgrace so humiliating, as the eulogies or satirical songs sung by quires of young females, and as the applause or the censure of venerable matrons. To preserve newly married husbands from the danger of excessive indulgence, and the satiety resulting from it, Lycurgus directed, that they should be permitted to pay only stolen visits to their wives, and that after their nuptials they should sleep as they had before done with young men of their own age. It was not rare for young couples to

have children before the husband had publicly visited his wife; for in Sparta it was deemed disgraceful for a young man to be found in company with his wife. In order that as great a number as possible of the most handsome, robust, and courageous citizens might be born to the state, Lycurgus permitted husbands to exchange their wives, if any one hoped to beget more and finer children by the wife of another than by his own; an old man might introduce a vigorous youth to his wife, that he might have a fairer progeny than he was himself capable of procreating; nay, men who were distinguished by beauty and valor, might even demand of any husband an interview with his wife, that they might beget children like themselves with any women they pleased.

The masculine, gymnastic exercises which Lycurgus prescribed for girls, were productive of these evident advantages, that the Spartan women surpassed all the females of Greece in personal beauty, and still more in manly courage, fortitude, and love of their country. These same exercises, however, combined with the groundwork of the disposition to a community of wives, which was laid in the laws of Lycurgus, were attended with the still greater

disadvantages of a boldness and pretensions unbecoming the sex, and of an immorality unparalleled in Greece. The pernicious effects of the unnatural laws of Lycurgus relative to the education of girls and the relaxation of the sacred bonds of wedlock, were not apparent so long as the Spartans observed the precepts of their legislator, so long as they continued in their ancient poverty, and retained their simplicity of manners and the equality, or rather community of property. In those times of innocence, the germs of the corruption which Lycurgus by his laws had sown in the hearts of the wives and daughters of his fellow-citizens were not yet unfolded; and I am therefore inclined to attach the more credit to what Plutarch affirms in several passages of his work, that the Spartans were strangers to adultery, as long as wealth, luxury, and intemperance were unknown at Lacedæmon*. A stranger, conversing with Geradatus, the Spartan, on the code of Lycurgus, expressed his surprize that the legislator had not prescribed any punishment for adultery, and asked in what manner it was customary to punish those who were guilty of that

* *Plut. I. p.* 196. *VI. p.* 851.

crime. "How," replied the Lacedæmonian, should there be adulterers in Sparta, where riches, a love of pomp, and fondness for dress are deemed disgraceful, and where modesty, frugality, and obedience to the laws are alone respected and admired?" The times in which such an observation might with truth be applied to the Spartans, ceased in the Peloponnesian war*. After the victories gained by the Spartan generals and armies at great distances from their native country, and consequently beyond the sphere of its laws and their ministers, over the Greeks and barbarians, who were equally corrupted, they imbibed of them in a few years a spirit of insatiable rapacity, and with it a correspondent love of luxury and debauchery. When the Spartans had once overthrown the main pillars which supported their whole constitution—poverty innocence, and all the laws became too weak to prevent the introduction of foreign treasures and foreign vices. The seeds of corruption which had heretofore lain dormant in the hearts of the women, now sprung up with a rapidity which it was impossible to check.

* *Meiners Geschichte der Wissenschaften, II. p.* 328, 570.

Females, both married and single, dishonoured themselves, their husbands, and their fathers, depraved the minds of youth and of their fellow-citizens, and rendered the return to the ancient constitution and the virtues of their forefathers totally impracticable. The Spartans were soon punished for their degeneracy and for their disobedience to the laws of Lycurgus, by the most ignominious humiliation of their once invincible country, by the almost total depopulation of their territory, and by the incurable decline of the commonwealth, which at length terminated in a lingering death.

As early as the age of Plato and Xenophon, and still more in the time of Aristotle, female honour was more rare at Sparta than public virtue, and such was the depravity of the sex, that the Lacedæmonian females were a scandal to all the rest of Greece, and the most intelligent observers were of opinion, that the corruption of the women was the principal cause of the decline and overthrow of the Spartan state*. Adultery was so common as near-

* *Xenophon de Rep. Lacedæmon. Plutarch. in Lycurgo, I. p.* 190, &c. and especially *Aristot. II. p.* 9, *in civitate.*

ly to produce a perfect community of wives; and it was so far from being dishonourable, that all the women envied an adultress the possession of a handsome and valiant paramour, and the husbands encouraged the adulterer to prosecute his intrigue, that he might present the state with sons resembling himself*. The more flagrant were the debaucheries of the Spartan women, so much the more immoderate became their pretensions, and so much the more absolute their authority over their degenerate husbands, who bowed their necks to the yoke of their women, as they submitted to that imposed by their appetites and their vices. They began to be treated as mistresses, and to be called by that name; and they not only assumed the authority of mistresses over their husbands

* *Plutarch in Pyrrho, II. p.* 785, &c. Chelidonis a Spartan lady of distinction lived in such open adultery with a handsome youth named Akrotatus, that her husband, Cleonymus, left his country in despair, and to gratify his revenge, went over to Pyrrhus, who was waging war with Sparta. When the monarch of Epirus assaulted the city itself, Akrotatus distinguished himself by his valor above all the rest of his countrymen. On his return from the conflict, covered with blood, he appeared in the eyes of the Spartan females greater and more beautiful than ever. They envied Chelidonis so valiant and so glorious a lover, and the Spartans themselves thus addressed the youth: "Continue, Akrotatus, to embrace Chelidonis, and present your country with children worthy of yourself."

and lovers, but they became the principal proprietors of immoveable possessions, which, with every other kind of goods, fell into the hands of a few heiresses or arrogant wives*. The other women of Greece praised the condition of the Spartan females, who possessed such authority over their husbands, and when a stranger once manifested some symptoms of envy at the apparent good fortune of the women of Lacedæmon, one of the latter returned this smart answer: "We are worthy to govern men, because we alone bring men into the world."† At Sparta, as among all the more noble but corrupt nations, the government of women was the surest sign that men who submitted to female authority no longer deserved to rule over other men.

The Spaniards furnish an additional confirmation of an old remark, that valour may exist in the most corrupt of men, or that it may be combined with the greatest depravity. It was not only during the period of innocence, but at the time when a general corruption of morals prevailed,

* See the authors above quoted, and especially *Plut.* I. p. 190, 191.

† *Apopth. Luc. ap. Plut. VI. p.* 894, &c.

that Sparta exhibited a greater number of instances than the other Greek states, of mothers and wives who exulted in the fall of their sons and husbands slain in the defence of their country, and others who dispatched their unworthy children with their own hands, or caused them to be put to death*. Even during the times of the greatest profligacy, Sparta produced females, who, by their courage, would have done honour to the laws of Lycurgus, had they not been disgraced by the irregularities of the rest of their lives. After the defeat at Leuctra, the relatives of the slain paraded the streets in their best apparel with an air of triumph, while the relations of the survivors, with downcast looks, and in all the negligence of the profoundest sorrow, avoided as much as possible the public view. When Pyrrhus laid siege to the city, the women laboured with no less assiduity than the men, at the formation of a ditch for the purpose of checking the first attack of the enemy. On the approach of the hostile army, mothers, wives, and virgins, putting their weapons into the hands of their sons, husbands, and lovers, reminded them how

* *Geschichte der Wissensch. II. p.* 553, 554.

sweet it would be to die in the presence of their native city, and in the arms of those to whom they were most dear, in a manner worthy of the ancient glory of Sparta*.

In Plutarch's treatise on the excellencies or virtues of women, which evinces rather the good-will of the author than ability to erect a monument in honour of the fair sex, are to be found, as in the annals of almost all the Greek states, examples of courage displayed by females in times of public danger. But these isolated instances of female heroism, are, upon the whole, as far from proving the excellence and the virtue of the sex, as individual examples of courage and fidelity in slaves are from evincing the valour and goodness of heart of the latter. Among the heroic deeds of females related by Plutarch†, the achievement of the Argive women deserves particular notice, not only on account of the singular consequences with which it was attended, but also on account of its authenticity. When Cleomenes, king of Sparta, had slain the greatest part of the Argives in a battle which he had gained,

* *Plutarch, II. p.* 785.
† *Ibid. VII. p.* 10, 11.

and was advancing to Argos, to make himself master of the city, Telesilla, the poetess, inspired her countrywomen, as if by supernatural agency, with more than masculine courage. Telesilla was of noble birth, but of a constitution so weak and sickly, that she applied to the gods for a remedy for her shattered health. The gods appear, even in ancient times to have known that in those weakly mortals, in whom the body generally triumphs over the mind, the latter in certain cases possesses far greater influence over the body than in more robust persons. They, accordingly, exhorted Telesilla to endeavour to overcome the infirmities of her body by the exertions of her soul, and to devote herself to the service of the Muses. Telesilla, in compliance with the counsel of the gods, began to cultivate poetry, and acquired such an ascendancy over her countrywomen, that she was enabled to rouze the fair of Argos in defence of their native city. Headed by the poetess, the women of Argos *manned* the walls and the other fortifications of the place, repulsed Cleomenes, and drove back beyond the gates the other Spartan king Demaratus, who had already gained possession of one

quarter of the town. After the deliverance of the city, the female patriots who had fallen were interred near the public road, that posterity and strangers who passed that way might never want a memorial of their virtue. The surviving heroines obtained the liberty of erecting a temple to the god of war, and of celebrating the anniversary of the preservation of Argos by a festival, which received the appellation of *Ta Ubristika*, the festival of disgrace, because on that day the men appeared in female apparel, and the women in male attire. This festival was celebrated so late as the time of Plutarch, and the observance of it during so long a period did more honour to the gratitude of the men of Argos, than its institution conferred on the intrepidity of the Argive heroines. The latter, not content with their annual triumph over their husbands, likewise introduced a custom, by which brides or young wives were permitted to assume a beard like a man, when they received their lovers or husbands in the bridal or conjugal bed. My fair readers themselves will admit, that never did important services claim so immoderate and extravagant a recompence as those which

the Argive women had rendered their country.

Far more rare and more praise-worthy than the heroic achievement of the Argive women, was the modest and unobtrusive virtue of the Cyanean fair, the memory of which is likewise preserved by Plutarch. On all festivals the virgins of Cyanea assembled with the youths of the other sex, and when the former sported and danced, the latter either partook, or were merely spectators of the diversion. On these occasions, the bands of love between the hearts of tender maidens and youths were commonly tied. When a female who had several admirers, declared in favour of one of her lovers, the others immediately desisted from all farther importunity. The Cyanean females boasted, that in the space of seven hundred years there was not a single instance of adultery or seduction among them; and if the assertion be true, the principal causes of this unparalleled purity of morals and chastity, doubtless were, the social festivals at which the maidens and the youths became acquainted with each other, and the good sense of the parents, who would not separate lovers

without important reasons, but, contrary to the custom of the other Greeks regarded their reciprocal affection as the foundation of their future happiness in the conjugal state.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Condition of the Female Sex among the Romans.

In almost all the points in which the Athenians and the other Greeks, excepting the Spartans, corresponded with the Oriental nations, the Romans also resembled the latter, and for the same reason which I have assigned in treating of the Greeks, because, in the remote periods of antiquity, Italy was not peopled by nations of pure Celtic origin. The affinity of the Romans to the European Slavons and the inhabitants of the East, is most clearly evinced by their treatment of the female sex in the times of liberty and innocence, when their women were indeed less rigidly confined than among the Greeks and Orientals, but in other respects were quite as dependent on fathers, brothers, husbands, and guardians, or perhaps still more so, than those of the latter. The servitude and dependence of the Roman women continued no longer than the sacred laws

(leges sacratæ) of Romulus and Numa, by which the authority of the men and the rights of the women were established. In the same degree in which the ancient customs and virtues were relinquished after the second Punic war, the power and severity of husbands were relaxed and the morality and modesty of wives decreased; and nearly in the same ratio as the men declined in worth and resigned their rights, the women acquired freedom and legal privileges. When, therefore, all political liberty and the most valuable prerogatives of Roman citizens were annihilated, during the reigns of the Roman emperors, the women obtained, like the slaves, one privilege after another, and were gradually released from those fetters, by which, as Cato the censor observes, their ancestors sought to shackle the women, and nevertheless were unable to keep them within bounds.*

The state of the female sex, among the Romans, principally differed, even in the most remote periods, from that of the women in the Oriental regions and in Greece, in this point, that the Roman females were never confined and separated

* *Livy, l.* 34. *ch.* 3.

from the society of the men. The Roman women might walk or ride abroad at what times, and in what places they pleased; they always ate with their husbands, and were never excluded from the entertainments to which strangers or friends were invited.* Instead, however, of lying at table like the men, upon a kind of couch or sopha, they sat upon chairs, because that attitude was justly thought more decorous. But long before the time of Valerius Maximus, the women of Rome had relinquished the practice of their mothers and grandmothers, and begun to recline at table like the men; so that the ancient custom was to be seen only at entertainments, that were given in honour of the gods and goddesses. On these occasions, in the time of Valerius, the goddesses were seated on chairs, while the gods reclined around the table on couches. Notwithstanding the association of the sexes at Rome, the women appear, in ancient times to have been extremely silent and reserved, and the husbands by no means communicative to their wives. Plutarch relates,† that Numa enjoined the women

* *Valerius Maximus II. ch.* 1.

† *In Numa I. p.* 309, 310.

the most rigid adherence to temperance and decorum, and such an abstinence from inquisitive questions and superfluous words, that they durst not speak even on subjects of necessity, except in the presence of their husbands. It is more than probable that Plutarch has here mistaken ancient customs for ancient laws, as he has also done in his life of Romulus.* "The Romans and their kings," says he, in the last-mentioned place, "enacted many laws, and ordinances in honour of the female sex. They decreed in particular, out of gratitude for the happy reconciliation which their wives had effected between them and the Sabines, that females and their children might wear ornaments and jewels of every kind; that they might ride in chariots in the city; that men should give way to them, and abstain in their presence not only from the indecent exposure of their persons, but also from the use of indecorous expressions." All these marks of respect are shewn at the present day to women in the East, but not so much for the purpose of doing honour to the latter, as to the jealousy of those to whom they belong. Neither was

* *I. p.* 121, 123.

it from motives of gratitude, but in consequence of an ancient Oriental or Slavonic custom, that the Romans permitted their women, in the most ancient times, to decorate their persons much more than the men. The females of Rome were allowed, from the earliest period, to ride in carriages in the city, to wear purple garments, and all kinds of ornaments of gold and silver, and it is probable that they not only powdered their hair red,* but likewise painted themselves after the Oriental and Slavonic fashion. In the second Punic war, the Roman women were prohibited by the Oppian law, to ride in carriages in the city and its environs, to wear purple garments, and gold trinkets of the weight of more than half an ounce, because the state required, for the most pressing exigencies, all the money and valuables formerly expended in procuring ornaments and conveniencies for the sex.† Immediately after the termination of the war, the Oppian law was repealed, notwithstanding the opposition of Cato, and the Roman ladies recovered the liberty of riding and dressing as they had formerly done. One argument advanced by the

* *Valer. Max.* as above.

† *Liv. l.* 34. *ch.* 1.

advocates of the women against the Oppian law was this, that the females of the allies enjoyed the same conveniencies, and wore the same dress and ornaments, which the Roman ladies had been obliged to relinquish, and it was unjust that the wives of the victorious and ruling nation should be deprived of privileges possessed by the wives of their neighbours, all of whom had been conquered and rendered dependent on Rome.*

Though the Roman women, by virtue

* The following fact may serve to shew how easy it is to misinterpret any individual custom, and to ascribe it to perfectly false motives, either commendable or dishonourable, without an intimate knowledge of a nation, and a careful comparison of all its laws and manners. Among the ancient Romans, sons and fathers, sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, never bathed together, and this custom was ascribed by Plutarch, *(in vita Catonis, II. p. 589.)* Valerius Maximus, (as above) and even Cicero, *(de Offic. I. p. 35.)* to the rigid morality or modesty of the ancient Romans. Had modesty been the cause why sons were not accustomed to uncover themselves before their fathers, it must also have prevented men in general from appearing naked in the presence of men. But sons only were prohibited to expose themselves before their fathers, because such a liberty would have been regarded as a violation of the respect they owed their parents; and fathers abstained from the practice in the presence of the sons, because they would have thought that they thereby compromised their paternal majesty. Plutarch was mistaken in supposing, that the Romans had learned of the Greeks to practise naked all kinds of gymnastic exercises; but the same historian observes with much more truth, that the Romans taught the Greeks the habit of bathing in company with the women.

of the usage of their remotest ancestors, were admitted to the table of their husbands, and were not confined by express laws, like the wives of the Greeks and Orientals, within their habitations, or prevented from paying visits, they were nevertheless, in consequence of another ancient national custom, much more reserved, appeared much seldomer at places of public resort, and had much less acquaintance or intimacy with other men, than in later times.* When the females of Rome, on the day appointed for discussing the propriety of repealing or confirming the Oppian law, assembled in the streets, stopping all the senators and tribunes, and endeavouring to prevail upon them to espouse their cause and to oppose the law, Cato censured their conduct as a highly dangerous inversion of ancient order and decorum, as rebellion against their husbands, the laws and the government, and as an irrefragable proof that the men had lost that majesty and supreme authority which their ancestors had sought to establish by so many wise regulations; " for," continued he, addressing the senate, " if each master of a

* *Liv. l.* 34. *ch.* 1.

family, emulating the example of his progenitors, had kept his wife in due subjection, we should not have had so much trouble in public with the whole sex."* So late, therefore, as the latter half of the sixth century after the foundation of Rome, it was quite unusual for women to appear without shame in the public places, to speak in those places to any other persons than their husbands, and to interest themselves so warmly and so openly in a circumstance on which, however, their whole temporal comfort depended.

The reserve of the sex in ancient Rome is still more strikingly evinced in the rarity of the appearance of females, whether married or single, before a tribunal of justice, and in the extraordinary sensation which circumstances of this kind occasioned at Rome. According to the most

* I shall subjoin the exordium only of Cato's speech, on the subject of the Oppian law, which excepting, perhaps, the beautiful language in which it was clothed, must certainly be regarded as genuine :---" Si in sua quisque nostrûm matrefamiliæ, Quirites, jus et majestatem viri retinere instituisset, minus cum universis fæminis negotii haberemus. Nunc domi victa libertas nostra impotentia muliebri, hic quoque in foro obteritur et calcatur: et quia singulas sustinere non potuimus, universas horremus." *Liv. lib.* 34. *ch.* 2.

ancient customs and laws of the Romans it was almost impossible for a woman to be brought in private causes before a court;* but when these laws and customs began to be disregarded, and the first woman undertook her defence before a tribunal, the senate deemed this instance of masculine boldness an omen, the signification of which it was necessary to implore the gods to reveal.† The names of those females who had pleaded or were accustomed to plead their own cause before the tribunal were preserved till the latest period, and each received a particular surname, or her own name was changed into one, which was afterwards given to women of the same description. One was called *Androgyne*, the *he-woman*; and the name of another, Afrania, became a term of reproach, which was applied to impudent and quarrelsome females.‡ At the period of the triumvirate of Augustus, Antony and Lepidus, however, Hortensia, the daughter of the great orator Hortensius, gained universal admiration for

* According to Plutarch, Romulus gave them the right of exemption from being cited before a penal tribunal. *Lip.* 121.

† *Ibid. I. p.* 308.

‡ *Valer. Max. l.* viii. *ch.* 3.

pleading the cause of the women, from whom the rapacious triumvirs had demanded the payment of a large sum, in a speech replete with all the fire and eloquence, which had distinguished her father.*

The Romans permitted their women to celebrate an annual feast, to commemorate the reconciliation effected by their wives, between them and the Sabines, and to which they gave the name of the festival of matrons.† They erected an equestrian statue to the valiant Clælia,‡ and a temple to female Fortune,§ in honour of the whole sex; because the mother and wife of Coriolanus, had caused that irresistible hero, whose career the men could not oppose with their arms, to retire, weeping, from the territory of his native country. The Romans acknowledged with gratitude the sacrifices made by their women, when

* The same compiler, says in another place, (II. p. 1.) that the laws prohibited the touching of a woman, who was cited to appear, but that Roman citizens might be dragged by force before a tribunal. I am very doubtful, however, if, in the most ancient times, there was any particular law respecting the treatment of women in a court of justice.

† *Matronalia, Plut. I. p.* 123, *in Romulo.*

‡ *Liry,* II. *p.* 13.

§ *Ibid.* II. *p.* 40.

the latter spontaneously contributed all their jewels and money, to satisfy the avaricious Gauls, and when they came forward, in the most urgent periods of the Punic war, in aid of their exhausted country.* Nevertheless, the ancient kings and the ancient laws for ages regarded children as slaves, and the women as children, who ought always to remain under the direction and authority of a man, and in a state of perpetual tutelage.† The severe laws, however, of the ancient Romans, will excite the less surprize when it is known that they commonly married their daughters in their twelfth year, or even still younger, at which age they could consequently not be treated otherwise than as children.‡

In whichsoever of the three customary ways§ a Roman woman was united to a man, she still continued in the same con-

* See the speech of L. Valerius, in *Livy, l.* 34. *ch.* 5.

† *Cato ap Livium, l.* 34, *ch.* 2. "Majores nostri nullam ne privatam quidem rem agere fæminas sine auctore noluerunt; in manu esse parentum, fratrum, virorum."

‡ *Plutarch, I. p.* 308, *in Numa.*

§ *Aut confarreatione, aut coemtione, aut usu.* See *Grupen's* excellent *Tract. de uxore romanâ. Hannover,* 1727; 8*vo. cap.* 3, 5.

dition as before. She indeed changed her name, and was transferred from the family, hand, or power of her father into the family, hand, or power of her husband; but, in other respects, the relations between her and the latter were exactly the same as those which had previously subsisted between her and her father; she retained the same privileges and duties, and, from the first moment of her marriage, was regarded as a daughter of her husband, and in the sequel as the sister of her own children.* According to the sacred laws of Romulus and Numa, the authority of the husband over his wife was as great as that of the father over his children; excepting perhaps that the husband could not sell his wife, as the father might dispose of his sons and daughters.† The same laws described the condition of a wife as a state of servitude, and her delivery to the husband as a transition into a species of slavery, in which she retained in name all the rights of a Roman citizen, but lost all the most valuable prerogatives of a free woman.‡

* *Grupen, p.* 20. 23. *Dionyss. Halicarn. II. c.* 25.

† *Ibid. p.* 56.

‡ Hence the legal expressions: *in manu sive potestate mancipioque mariti esse---marito servire---sustinere conditionem liberæ servitutis. Grupen, p.* 21. Hence also the

In the absolute authority of the husband over the wife, as his daughter, and the implicit obedience of the wife, as his child, originated the rights as well as the duties conferred and imposed by the Roman laws upon both. As the daughter of the husband, she was sole heir to his property, if he left no issue; but if she had borne children to her husband, who was regarded by the law as her father, she received in quality of their sister an equal portion with them.* Among the filial rights of the Roman wives, one of the most important was, that the bonds of conjugal union were indissoluble, and consequently that, according to the ancient Roman laws and customs, divorces were not allowed. †

conventio in manum, or transfer to the husband, was, like the adoption of a child, considered as a *minima capitis diminutio*. *Ulp. ap. Grup. p.* 76. "Minima capitis diminutio est per quam et civitate et libertate salva status duntaxat hominis mutatur; qnod fit adoptione et in manum conventione."

* *Ibid. p.* 81.

† *Dionys. Halicarn.* as above. *Val. Max. II. p.* 1. *Grupen, p.* 58, 175, 177. 180. Plutarch relates that, according to the laws of Romulus, the wife could not obtain a separation from her husband, but that he might put her away in three cases, that is, if she had poisoned his children, procured false keys, or committed adultery. But Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who describes marriage as indissoluble according to the sacred laws, deserves more credit than Plutarch, because the testimony of the former is confirmed by the whole history

Five hundred and twenty years elapsed from the foundation of the city, before a divorce was heard of at Rome, not because all marriages till that time had been happy, and all husbands content, but because it was imagined that a man had no more, or not so much right to put away his wife as his child. When, therefore, the Roman knight, Carvilius, dismissed his wife on account of barrenness, his conduct was the subject of universal censure, not that the reason for separation was thought too trivial, but because the people, being unaccustomed to divorces, could scarcely conceive the possibility of such an occurrence. From the same source whence sprung the rights of Roman wives, originated also their duties, obligations and restrictions. The wives of the Romans were equally incapacitated with their children to acquire or possess any thing by right of property, but whatever they acquired or possessed, belonged *ipso jure* to the husbands.* Accordingly the whole dowry of a wife, and all that devolved to her by inheritance, immediately became the property of the

of Rome, and by the nature of the domestic authority of the husband, at the most remote period.

* *Grupen, p. 63.*

husband; and if she died before the latter, he retained whatever she had brought him, not as heir, but because the estate of the wife had already in her life-time become his property. Wives no more enjoyed the right of making wills than children, they durst no more prefer complaints against their husbands, than children against their parents, nor could they accept presents even from their husbands, because presents made by the latter to their wives, were the same as though they had been given to themselves.* Finally, the power possessed by the husband over his wife, was as unlimited as his parental authority over the children.† He held in his hands the power of life and death, and could, with the consent of her relations, punish her for any fault in any way he thought proper; nay, he was even authorized by the sacred laws of Romulus, to put her to death, not only for adultery, but merely for drinking wine.‡ The propensity of the Roman women to wine, and the irregularities arising from intemperance, must have been very great and flagrant, because Romulus not only pro-

* *Grupen, p.* 63, &c.

† *Dionys. Halicarn.* as above. *Grupen, p.* 49---51, and *p.* 110.

‡ *Ibid.*

hibited the weaker sex the use of wine, but attached the punishment of death to the violation of his law. While the husband possessed the power of punishing his wife as he pleased for smaller faults, and even of putting her to death, the latter had not even the right of complaining, if he was guilty of the greatest crime that a husband can commit against his wife. "If," says the elder Cato,* "you surprize your wife in adultery, you may kill her without trial. But if she surprizes you in a like fact, the law will not permit her to touch you, not even with the tip of her finger." Such and similar fragments of Cato the Censor are not the only proofs, that the ancient laws relative to wedlock and the authority of the husband continued, with scarcely any alteration, throughout the first sixteen centuries after the foundation of the city. The long observance of the laws of Romulus, and the reservation of the rights of husbands founded upon that code, are evinced by the sentences passed upon the females, who had taken part in the mysteries of Bacchus, and the atrocities practised on such occasions. Such as were found guilty were delivered either to their husbands, or to those, in whose hands they were,

* *Apud Aul. Gellium*, X. *p.* 23.

that they might execute the sentence of of the law upon them in private; but if among those persons there was none fit or willing to put them to death, the delinquents were publicly executed.*

With the excessive corruption of morals, which after the destruction of Carthage spread like a contagion among all ranks, sexes, and ages, arose at Rome a new species of marriage, new conjugal relations, and new rights and duties of husbands and wives.

The laws of Romulus acknowledged no other marriages but those in which the wife was delivered to the husband as a child to her father, and all the rights heretofore possessed by the father over his daughter were transferred to the husband, and which were in general accompanied with a great number of religious ceremonies. In the interval between the elder Cato and Cicero, the religious ceremonies at weddings fell into disuse.* The marriages, by which the husband acquired the rights of paternal authority over the wife became more rare; or if such marri-

* "Mulieres damnatas cognatis, aut in *quorum manu* essent, tradebant: ut ipsi in privato animadverterent in eas. Si nemo erat idoneus supplicii exactor, in publico animadvertebatur." *Liv. lib.* 39. *ch.* 18. This occurred in the year of Rome 566.

* *Grupen, p.* 310.

ages were concluded, the wives were emancipated, as was customary with respect to children.* Brides were no longer willing to become *matres-familias*, but *uxores tantum*, over whom the husband acquired no paternal authority,† and none but these *mere wives* were acknowledged by the laws enacted or enforced by the emperors.‡ This new description of wives was permitted not only to possess the right of property to dowries and other effects, which though consigned to the care and management of the husbands, and expended with the consent of the wives, could not be alienated by the former. These the laws began to secure to the wives, and to allow them the right of complaining.§ Opulent females were not only suffered to employ the property which they retained in their own hands for the purpose of rendering their

* Respecting the *emancipatio, or remancipatio uxorum*, see *Grupen*, *p.* 95.

† Wives who were transferred to husbands as children, were termed *matres-familias*; those on the other hand, over whom the husband did not acquire the paternal authority, were denominated *uxores tantum*." " Video," says Bœthius, " uxori duas inesse formas, quarum una *tantum uxor* est, altera *mater-familias*, quæ in manum conventione perficitur." *Grupen*, *p.* 6, 295, where other testimonies are collected.

‡ *Grupen*, *p.* 297.

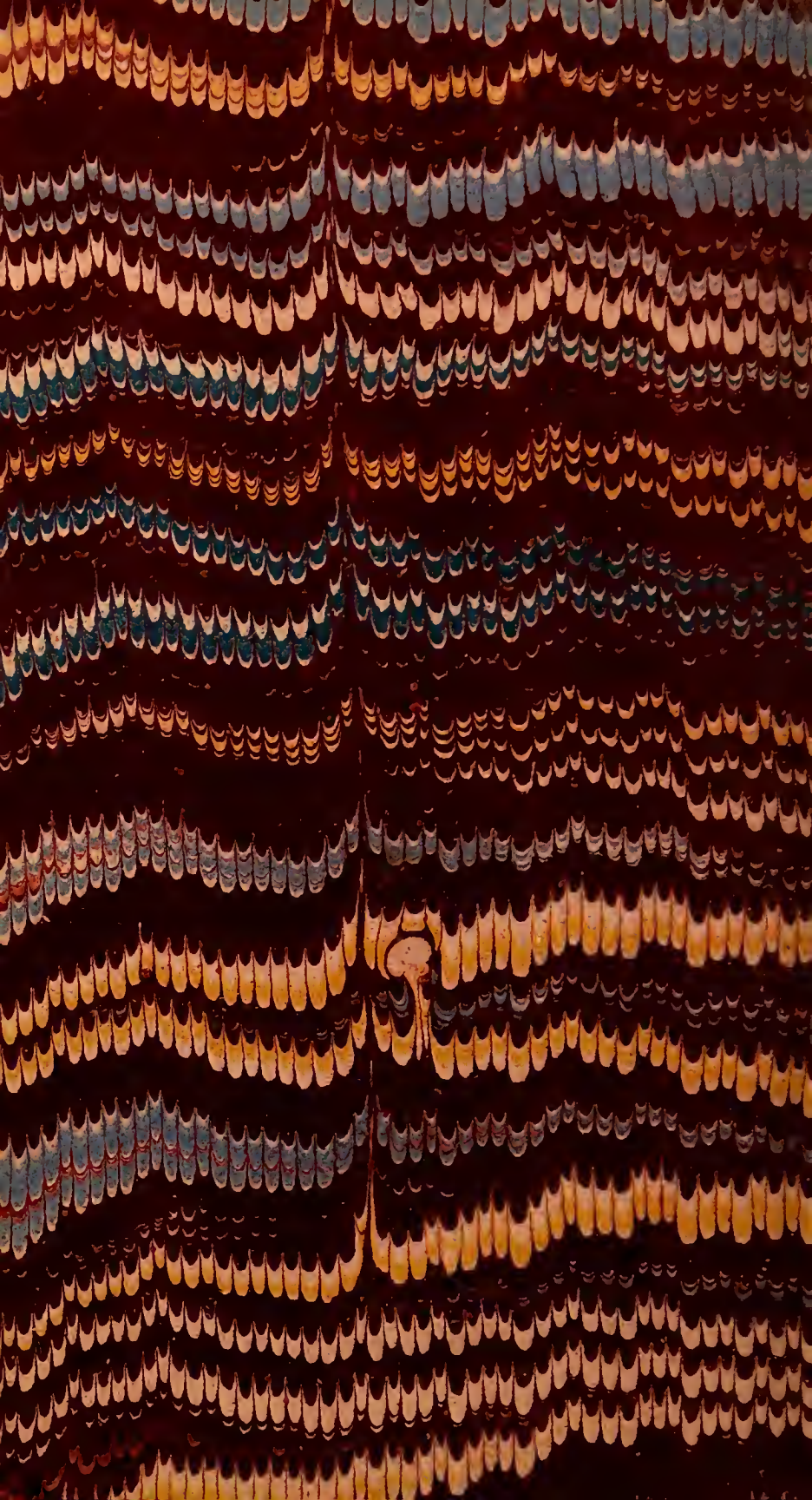
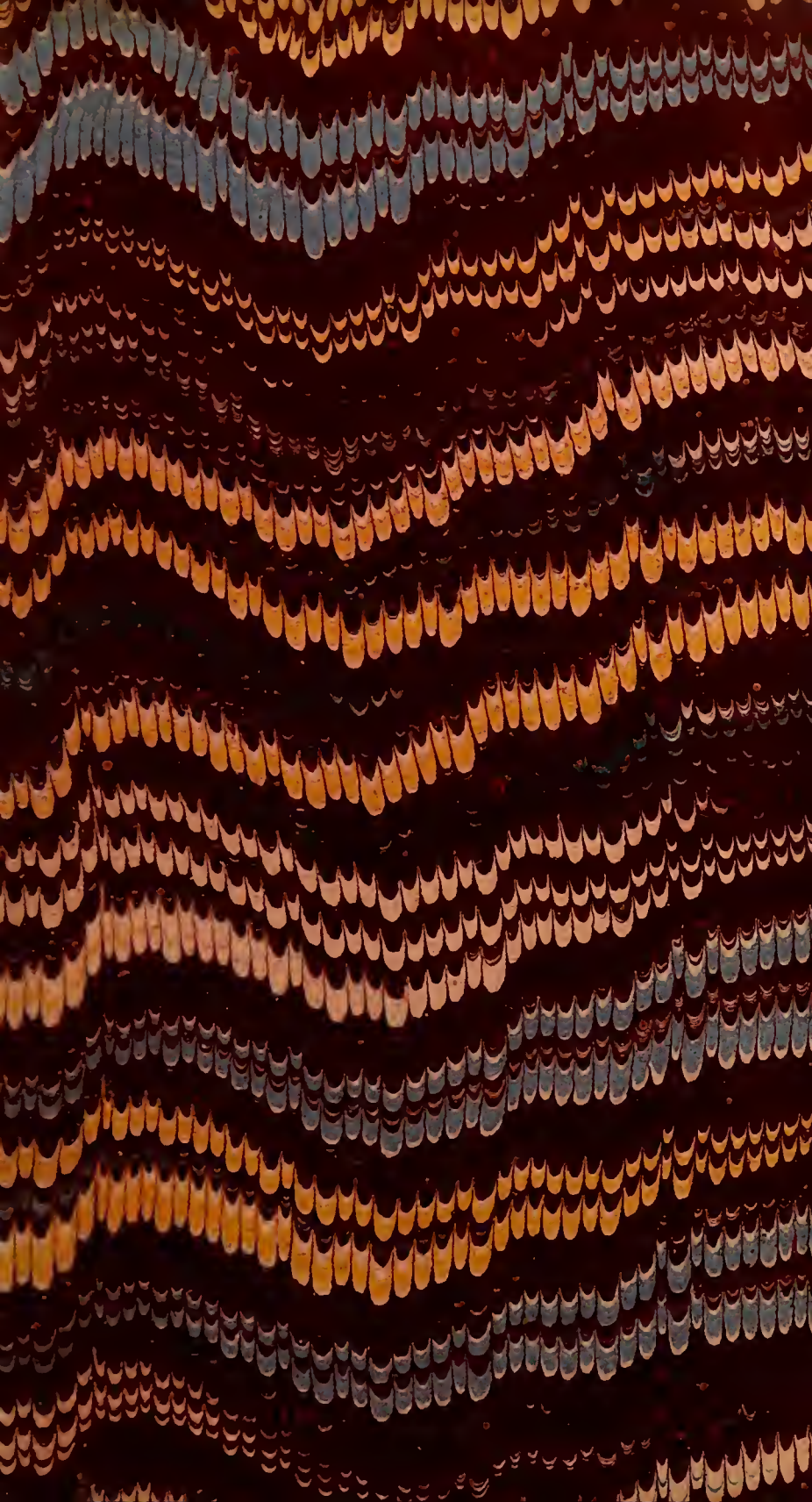
§ *Grupen*, *p.* 314---327. Property of this kind, was called *parapherna*, or *bona extradotalia*.

husbands dependent on them, but it was expected or even required that husbands, who received a large dowry, should make a proportionate settlement on their brides, which settlement was called *donatio ante*, or *propter nuptias*, and under the emperors might be deferred till after the consummation of the marriage.* Long before the time of Cicero, the lawyers, enervated by the general corruption of morals, had employed all the subtleties of their profession, which had not escaped the contagion, to emancipate the sex from the power of guardians, as well as from the paternal authority of husbands; and Cicero roundly declares, that through the kind aid of advocates, the guardians of females were such only in name, but that in fact they were totally in the power of the women.† When husbands availed themselves of the privileges conferred by the twelve tables, and repudiated or discarded their wives, they were obliged to restore their dowry, and probably to allow them a maintenance besides. Wives,

* *Grupen, p.* 240, &c.

† *Pro Murena, ch.* 12. "Nam cum permulta præclarè legibus essent constituta ea jurisconsultorum ingeniis pleraque corrupta, et depravata sunt. Mulieres omnes propter infirmitatem consilii majores in tutorum potestate esse voluerunt, hi invenerunt genera tutorum, qui potestate mulierum continerentur."

on the other hand, who separated unlawfully from their husbands, lost nothing but their dowry, and very often not even that;* though at the period when divorces were most frequent, it certainly formed but a small portion of the property of wives. Adultery was not less common than these separations, and it was committed with equal impunity. A wife publicly convicted of adultery, was at most divorced, and if the sentence pronounced by the ancient laws against this crime had been executed, almost the whole of the fair sex at Rome, must have been exterminated.† In the later periods of the republic, the Roman women committed crimes the most abhorrent to the female character, with the same shameless audacity, as the most powerful and hardened villains. Single women, wives and widows of high rank, attached themselves as publicly to their lovers as the men kept their mistresses. Women had the principal share in the most horrid plots; they were the authors of the most unnatural poisonings and assassinations, and the persons who executed the most

† *Grupen, p.* 177---180. On the divorces of the Romans.

‡ See my *Essay on the Decline of the Morals and Political Constitution of the Romans, p.* 199, &c.